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CHAPTER XIII.

MARJORY TAKES COUNSEL.

THE young man turned sharply with an astonished glance, which quickly changed into a look of delighted recognition.

"Why, Marjory, where have you sprung from? How did you come here?"

"I am staying near this—but oh, Dick, are you really a workman? Do you carry a hod?"

"I have got beyond that; I am getting on, and I am right glad to see you have escaped as well as myself."

"Only for a little while, Dick," shaking her head. "Oh, can you not come away and tell me everything? I have missed you so dreadfully, and wondered so often what you were doing."

A smile lit up Dick's face, as he said, "Have you?"

During the rapid interchange of these sentences, Mr. Carteret stood in speechless astonishment, which changed rapidly to indignation as he perceived his precious sketch-book and pencil-case on the ground, where Marjory had dropped them on recognizing Dick, the former lying open and some loose leaves scattered about.

"This is a very extraordinary and romantic *rencontre*," he said to Ellis, who stood beside him looking on with quiet critical curiosity. "Really, Marjory is too utterly unconventional. See how all these fellows are staring!" Then advancing, he exclaimed, "I wish, Marjory, you could be a little less demonstrative and impetuous; I have no doubt the points of my pencils are broken, and all my loose sketches are tumbling in the dust."

"Well, I could not help it!" cried Marjory, who was for the moment exalted far beyond the fear of consequences. "You see I was so surprised to see Dick, I forgot about everything else."

"That is very evident. Pray may I ask who 'Dick' is?" asked Mr. Carteret in a slightly contemptuous tone which stung Marjory.

"He is my brother, my half-brother. I have not seen him or heard of him for ages, and I was *so* glad."

"Naturally," put in Ellis; "Miss Acland is, I am sure, a staunch friend."

Dick turned to him, undisturbed by being thus suddenly brought into notice. "You are right," he said emphatically. "I will not keep you, Marge, I have too long a story to tell; I will write to you, and come and see you, if I may? Where shall I address?"

"Oh! I wish you could come *now*!" cried Marjory, looking up to him with moist eyes.

"Well, I can't, you see."

"Then write soon, soon," said Marjory earnestly; "I am staying with my uncle, Mr. Carteret, at the Priory—Langford Priory."

"I know it. Good-bye, Marjory, it *is* jolly to see you again;" and Marjory was obliged to return to her uncle.

Ellis meantime had picked up the sketch-book and continued to carry it, Marjory being too much agitated to notice that or anything else.

"Pray how comes it that this young man is in such a—very extraordinary position? I am afraid he is a ne'er-do-weel," asked Mr. Carteret.

"He is nothing of the kind!" cried Marjory indignantly. "He is as good and steady as he can be. He quarrelled with his mother, and he hated being in my father's office, so he went away to seek his fortune."

"He appears to have been eminently successful in his search," remarked Ellis quietly.

"He will be successful, *that* I am quite sure," returned Marjory, with calm assurance. "But it must be rather dreadful, working as he does with common men, though Dick would be vexed if he heard me call *any* one common."

"Hum, a young radical, I suppose, in addition to his other qualities," growled Uncle Carteret.

But Marjory did not heed him, she had turned and looked back. "I think he is taller than ever!" she exclaimed, as if speaking out her thoughts; then Ellis knew their eyes had met, for she brightened all over with a vivid smile and waved her hand. "I am sorry I dropped your book, uncle, but I do not think there is any harm done," she said, as if with an effort.

"That is not your fault," returned Mr. Carteret testily.

Marjory did not seem to hear him. She was too excited and exhilarated by this sudden encounter to heed what was going on about her. Dick did not look ill, or worn, or unhappy; on the contrary, he was bright, embrowned and cheerful, more cheerful than she had ever seen him before; nay, there was something assured and dignified in his bearing, that seemed to ennoble his workman's

garb. "He looks like a gentleman, in spite of his clothes," was her most definite impression; "now, if George comes down and they see each other, if we are together even for a day, how delightful it will be! I ought to have a letter from George to-morrow morning. I will not say a word about meeting Dick when I write home." While she so communed with herself, mixing past, present, and future in her chequered musing, a gentleman joined Mr. Carteret and Ellis, a short, broad, keen-eyed man, roughly dressed in a tweed suit and a soft felt hat. Marjory was roused by her uncle's voice saying sharply:

"Marjory, Marjory! Lord Beaulieu is speaking to you."

"Oh, yes, I beg your pardon!" she exclaimed, colouring and smiling a sweet deprecating smile, "I did not hear."

"I was asking if this is your first visit to Beaulieu," said Lord Beaulieu good-naturedly.

"Yes! I have often wished to come, but had no one to come with. It is very beautiful, and when finished——"

"My occupation will be o'er," put in Lord Beaulieu smiling. His voice was refined and pleasing and made his hearers forget the plainness of his exterior. "In a week or so I shall be able to show you the chapel; at present it is a mass of confusion, you could form no idea of it." Then turning to Mr. Carteret he continued: "It has been tedious work, and I have been obliged to take several of the men away to finish some apartments for my sister, Mrs. Maynard, who thinks her native air may do her good."

"I trust she is regaining strength and spirits," said Ellis, with an air of interest.

"I have not seen her for some time; but I believe she is rousing up a little. It was an awful blow to be left a widow after little more than a year of marriage. The baby, of course, is a great consolation. My sister married young Maynard of Leighton Abbot, who broke his neck out hunting, last March," continued Lord Beaulieu, explaining to Mr. Carteret. "It was a melancholy business—they were very happy and everything promised well. The son and heir was about six weeks old when his father was killed."

"Very unfortunate indeed," said Mr. Carteret, in a polite tone. "This infant, then, is heir to a large property? I remember the curious circumstances of old Maynard's will, under which the present man took the estate."

"The worst of it is, poor young Maynard's father cannot bear his little grandson out of his sight, and the mother will not leave him; so she is buried alive in that big desolate place in Yorkshire. Her father-in-law does not like her to go anywhere except here. He has an idea I shall never marry, and that my small nephew may be the heir of Beaulieu as well as of Leighton Abbot. Now, Mr. Carteret, you must come round to the principal front, and give me your opinion on one or two slight changes I have made in the general design."

"My poor judgment is quite at your service," said Mr. Carteret complacently; and they walked on, Lord Beaulieu pointing out whatever he considered worthy of notice, and his companion happy in being able to detect various faults.

Marjory and Ellis followed in silence.

"May I intrude upon your thoughts?" asked the latter, after studying her face with impunity, perceiving that she was scarcely conscious of what was going on around her.

Marjory looked at him with a slight start, as if waking from a dream. She had not taken in the sense of his words.

"May I speak to you?" resumed Ellis, laughing. "Your spirit was so evidently absent, I hesitated to bring you back from your, I presume, happy memories."

"No—not at all happy!" said Marjory, with a quick sigh.

"Ah! well, I daresay it was a little trying to find your brother in workman's garb."

"It was not that altogether, but he has been badly treated. I have been very unkind to him myself; and now——" she stopped abruptly.

"You are repentant, and wish to atone for the wrong you have done. I am glad to hear it, for I may hope you will feel remorse later on for your consistent and undeserved bad treatment of myself."

"I never behaved badly to you; and I am sure it would be no great matter if I had. You will go away soon, and I shall never see you again."

"Are you quite sure?" asked Ellis, in a low tone; but Marjory did not heed him.

"Dick was always good and patient; and he had not a friend in the world but George—except my father perhaps," she went on, "while you——"

"Are not good, and have heaps of friends," put in Ellis as she stopped.

"I daresay you are very good. Indeed!" turning to him with a sudden burst of gratitude, "you have been good to me. If you had not backed me up about George, Uncle Carteret would not have invited him here. And if I have the great pleasure of seeing both my brothers together, it will be chiefly owing to you."

Her eyes softened as she looked kindly at him.

"If tenderness touched her, the dark of her eye
At once took a deeper, a heavenlier dye,"

quoted Ellis, smiling, while his own gaze grew more intense. "When you understand your own powers better, you will know that your strength does not lie in the fiery indignation you sometimes display, but in the melting mood which is—shall I say—irresistible?"

Marjory did not answer. She felt hurt, without exactly knowing

why. His mocking tone jarred upon her present excited mood, on her tender regretful recollections. She looked down, while her cheek flushed and her lip quivered.

"You are displeased," said Ellis, watching her. "I have said nothing to deserve your displeasure. Seriously, I want to be good friends with you, and my assistance is not to be despised. You will want to see this brother sometimes, and I will help you, in this or any other case."

"Thank you," murmured Marjory; but she did not quite like his mixing himself in her affairs. She wanted no one to come between her and Dick, or to show off his fine gentleman airs to the brother who had for the present laid aside his social position.

Ellis looked at her as if about to speak again, but checked himself. They had now joined Lord Beaulieu and Mr. Carteret, who were standing before the chief entrance, deep in an argument respecting the transition from Norman to Early English style, most of which was Greek to Marjory, but in which Ellis occasionally entered, with evident knowledge of what he was talking about. At last, Mr. Carteret thought of looking at his watch, and declared it was time to start on their homeward track.

"I hope you will come again soon," said Lord Beaulieu, "when the interior will be sufficiently advanced to allow of your forming some idea of what it will be. I was fortunate to fall in with a very clever and exceedingly Bohemian artist in the Pyrenees last year—I had met him in America before—and he has designed some excellent decorations for the principal rooms. I hope Mrs. Carteret and Miss Acland will drive over also, my sister will be very glad to see both ladies indeed; she had the pleasure of knowing Mrs. Carteret in Italy."

"Mrs. Carteret would be charmed," her husband was sure, "and Lord Beaulieu would be so good as to excuse plain speaking, but in matters of taste——"

"Mr. Carteret's is unimpeachable," put in Lord Beaulieu, who accompanied his visitors across the park before taking leave of them.

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Marjory was too excited to fall asleep as she generally did as soon as her head was on the pillow, the night after this *rencontre*. She lay long awake, thinking over the past, and seeing bright impossible visions of the future.

But to-morrow morning brought disappointment. There was no letter from George when Mr. Carteret opened the post bag at breakfast and distributed its contents. Ellis raised his eyebrows with a questioning sympathetic expression, as he watched Marjory's expectant look change to one of discomfiture.

"So he is not coming to-day?" said Ellis, strolling into the library a few minutes after Marjory had settled to her usual work.

She shook her head. "I suppose Mrs. Acland is contriving to delay him."

"Why should she take that trouble?"

"I do not know; probably to annoy *me*."

"You dislike her very much; one can see that, though you say little. Don't you think she would be a very stupid woman to waste her energies on so small an object?"

"It seems so. Yet she always tried to keep George away from me. He is rather good friends with her, which is annoying;" she stopped abruptly, feeling it would not do to allow herself too much licence on this exciting topic, especially to one whom she vaguely distrusted.

"And you have no tidings of the other either?" pursued Ellis, seating himself at a small writing-table in one of the windows, and setting forth pens, ink, and paper.

"What? From Dick? No, I did not expect to hear from him so soon;" a pause.

"Do you mind my writing my letters here?" was his next question. "If I disturb you I can write elsewhere."

"I do not mind at all, if you do not speak."

"Thank you, in spite of your unsociable proviso."

"I will not speak to you, so we need not disturb each other."

Ellis bent his head in silent acquiescence, and for some time profound quiet reigned. Ellis had rapidly penned two or three letters, and Marjory had copied a couple of slips which contained the names of those volumes classified under E and F into the catalogue she was making.

At length Ellis, who had glanced at her occasionally, noting how absorbed she was in her work, laid down his pen, and asked, "May I speak?"

"Yes," returned Marjory shortly, without looking up.

"I am a good deal puzzled about this half-brother of yours. You are the daughter of your father's first wife. Where does this young man come in? for he is a good deal older than you."

"Mrs. Acland was a widow, and Dick is *her* son."

"Oh! I see. Then in fact he is not your half-brother, he is no relation at all."

"Is he not? I imagine he must be a sort of brother—at any rate I consider him one now, though I disliked him so much at first and treated him as an intruder."

"How long is it since your father married?"

"Rather more than seven years."

"I suppose Mrs. Acland is handsome? This young fellow is good-looking."

"I thought him ugly when I saw him first. He was all legs and arms, and was so dull and heavy, I was dreadfully unkind to him."

"What is his name?"

"Cranston."

"Cranston," repeated Ellis, "I seem to know the name. What induced him *really* to leave a comfortable home for so unsuitable an occupation?" looking keenly at her.

But for his searching eyes, Marjory might have told the whole story in her eagerness for sympathy, and her indignation at the wrong done to Dick; but she checked herself, and only said, "His mother was always quarrelling with him and hated him, and he detested being in my father's office. He wanted to be an architect; so when things became unbearable he went away, and nobody seemed to care, so I never knew where he was till I saw him yesterday."

"There are a great many steps between a mason and an architect," said Ellis; "I suppose he has no money?"

"I do not think he has a penny. I think his father was an artist and rather a bad man," returned Marjory, and she resumed her work, while Ellis thought to himself, "Old Acland has probably fallen victim to an adventuress. His sweet little daughter has a bad look out. It would be a meritorious act to take her out of the stepmother's clutches and put her in some pretty pleasant nest, well sheltered from observation as well as from winter and cold weather, but she is a very wild bird."

Here Mr. Carteret came in to inspect Marjory's progress, and to find various minute faults, so the conversation ended.

Ellis finished his letters very soon, and went noiselessly away.

The next day, however, brought Marjory two letters—one from George announcing his advent on the following Saturday, only to stay till Monday, and concluding hastily, "I can tell you all about everything when we meet."

The second was from Dick.

"I am longing for a talk with you," he said, "but I am afraid it will be difficult to manage, for I do not like to call at the Priory. I have reconnoitred the country, and find that midway between the village and the Priory, on the path through woods and over the hill, some trees have been felled and are lying about. If you can walk so far on Sunday afternoon, I could meet you. I have much to tell, and some good news. Let me know if you can manage this. Address me at the Post Office, Langford—I lodge close by. Do not put 'Esquire' on your letter!—Yours affectionately, Dick Cranston."

"I will go and look at the place to-day if I can," was Marjory's mental resolve as she read these letters, with a beaming face, which fully informed Ellis, who sat opposite her at breakfast, who were the writers and what the contents.

"George says he can come on Saturday and stay till Monday afternoon, since you are so very kind as to invite him," she exclaimed, addressing Mr. and Mrs. Carteret, "and you have made me very happy, I cannot thank you enough."

Mrs. Carteret smiled good-naturedly, and her husband remarked that he supposed the catalogue would stand still for two days at least.

"And afterwards," said Marjory, "I will work harder than ever to make up for lost time."

"There will not be much time lost," observed Ellis from behind his newspaper. "Saturday is always a half holiday, and of course you do not expect Miss Acland to break the Sabbath, sir."

"To think that I shall see George the day after to-morrow!" murmured Marjory, as if to herself. "I can hardly believe it!"

For the rest of the meal she was evidently preoccupied and answered at random, while her heightened colour and sparkling eyes showed the joyous excitement of her heart.

The time which intervened before the arrival of George was not however without uneasy considerations.

The young sailor was to start at cockerow by a cheap train arriving at Market Gilston about noon, and Marjory was puzzled as to how he was to accomplish the five or six miles which lay between the station and the Priory.

She knew—or guessed—that he would scarcely have spare cash enough to pay for a private conveyance, and there was no public one to be had. He might walk, of course, but that would seem very miserable to the servants and every one. Then she had only a few shillings herself. Neither Uncle nor Aunt Carteret seemed to think it necessary to send a carriage for him, at least they said nothing about it, and she could *not* screw up courage to ask. She dreaded irritating Uncle Carteret, and so risking a cold reception for her brother, whose brief visit she wished to make as bright and agreeable as possible.

After cogitating on this difficult question, Marjory reluctantly decided on availing herself of the offer Ellis had made to help her in any way he could, and applying to him for assistance.

It was something of an effort to speak to him, but for George's sake she would venture.

She found the opportunity that evening, when Mrs. Carteret and Virginia were absorbed in a box from Paris.

The perfume of delicate tobacco guided her to the ruins, where she found Ellis seated on a broken column.

"Excuse me for interrupting you," began Marjory shyly.

"Won't you sit down?" asked Ellis, as if he had expected her.

"I have come to ask your help," resumed Marjory, gathering some wild roses and plucking them to pieces as she spoke.

"It is yours."

"You know George is coming to-morrow?"

"Yes! I rejoiced in your pleasure yesterday, to-day a change has come o'er the spirit of your dream. You are worrying about something."

"I am; but how can you tell?"

"I should be a very stupid fellow, very unfit for a diplomate, if I could not read *your* face."

"I do not like the idea of your—of any one knowing my thoughts."

"I daresay not; but how can I be useful to you?"

"You see Gilston is more than five miles away, and—and—Uncle Carteret has not offered to send for George."

"I see; and you want to go and meet him?"

"Yes, I should like to do so very much."

"Leave it to me," said Ellis; "when is he due?"

"At 12.20."

"That might suit me very well. I think of going to town for a few days."

"Oh, don't go!" cried Marjory impulsively; "I should be so sorry if you were away while George is here."

"Indeed!" looking down into her eyes, "I feel flattered."

"It is a selfish wish on my part," she returned with a half smile, and meeting his glance frankly, "but Mr. Carteret would be kinder to George, if you were here to keep him in order!"

Ellis laughed. "I wish I had the influence with which you credit me."

"Still he is never so cross when you are here," said Marjory.

"He is rather a cantankerous subject," returned Ellis. "You will be very glad to get away."

"Indeed I shall not. I prefer being here to being at home, and Aunt Carteret is very kind."

"She is a remarkably well-bred woman," returned Ellis gravely.

"Well, Miss Acland, you may consider this matter settled, and be ready to start at half-past eleven to-morrow."

"Thank you very much, I am really grateful." She half offered him her hand and then drew it back with sweet girlish shyness.

"Why baulk your own gracious impulse?" exclaimed Ellis quickly, as he caught and kept it for a moment. "Let this be a token of plenary absolution from the penalties I may unconsciously have incurred. Will you accept me as your friend and colleague in future?"

"Thank you very much," repeated Marjory, uneasy, she knew not why. "You are really very good, but I—I don't think we are exactly suited to be friends. Now I must go, Mrs. Carteret may want me."

"Don't!" emphatically. "Not yet. Who was with her when you came out?"

"Virginie."

"Then she is not ready for you yet by a long way. Tell me more about this brother of yours, and the young mason. He really looked too good for such work."

Marjory hesitated. She wished to go, she wished to stay. It was delightful to talk about the two boys she loved so well, and

Ellis contrived to put so much sympathy into his voice, though he said little, that Marjory was insensibly drawn into talking more of home and its circumstances than she quite approved on reflection.

"Perhaps if I were to ask Beaulieu to speak to the clerk of the works he might give young Cranston a lift," said Ellis thoughtfully.

"That would be a great help," cried Marjory. "I will tell Dick; he will know how you can help him."

"When are you going to see him?" sharply.

"On Sunday. I shall take George with me to meet him on the path to the village. I can hardly believe that we three shall be all together again. I *am* so much obliged to you, Mr. Ellis;" she turned as she spoke and walked quickly towards the house, pausing at the entrance of the ruins to wave her hand and give him a backward glance.

The day so eagerly anticipated by Marjory rose fair and smiling. It was the end of July and the weather was indescribably charming. Breakfast-time came and no word was spoken as yet about sending for George. Marjory could not eat; she shot one or two appealing glances at Ellis, who made no sign. At last, when the meal was nearly over, he said, addressing Mrs. Carteret, "As I am going to drive over to Gilston, Miss Acland might like to come and meet her brother, perhaps."

"But Marjory might get on with the catalogue this morning while waiting for—" began Mr. Carteret.

"I should not advise you to trust her in her present excited mood," interrupted Ellis smiling. "Depend upon it, she would have to tear up to-morrow what she wrote to-day."

"Very likely, very likely indeed!" cried Mr. Carteret peevishly.

"I can work till—till Mr. Ellis is ready to start," put in Marjory. "And I will be very careful—I do want very much to go and meet George."

"Oh! I know what your carefulness is, young lady," returned Mr. Carteret.

Marjory was tremulous with joy and anticipation when she was informed that Mr. Ellis was ready and waiting for her.

She ran downstairs, her gloves not yet buttoned, looking more than pretty in a fresh morning frock and a shady hat turned up at one side, a tea-rose with its dark green leaves fastened under the brim. Ellis was already seated in the dog-cart and stretched out his hand to assist her ascent.

As soon as they were clear away, Marjory exclaimed: "It was such a relief this morning when you spoke of driving over to Gilston and taking me; I grew dreadfully nervous till you did speak."

"I think you might have trusted me," looking into her eyes

with an expression that created an indefinite sense of embarrassment, which she told herself was too stupid.

"Yes, I think I ought," she returned softly, and fell into silence. The great pleasure of meeting her brother, now it was so near, grew shadowy with the fear of seeing him sorely changed by the roughness of his life since they last met, with the anticipation of parting again so soon. Then the keen sense of wrong done him by sending him from home in so inferior a position woke up again, and deepened her gravity.

"Do you not think you have tormented yourself enough?" Ellis asked at length.

"How do you mean?" exclaimed Marjory with startled eyes.

He laughed. "You are very much afraid of my reading your thoughts! I can see, however, that your meditations have not been pleasant."

"Well, no! I am afraid George will be a good deal changed, after living among sailors and people like that, and," with a sigh, "he was so nice."

"Do not trouble about it. A few minutes will answer the conjecture. Besides, it takes a great deal to change nature."

There was a pause.

"Do you think we are really related, as you said we were?" asked Marjory abruptly.

"Yes, certainly. I am old Carteret's third cousin, or some such thing, and you are his grand-niece. Of course we are cousins."

"And so is George?"

"No doubt."

A little further talk about Marjory's disappointment at his not being in the Navy brought them to the town.

"Suppose I leave you at the station," said Ellis, "and go about my business, which is only a visit to the saddler's, then you can have a few minutes with your brother before I return to pick you up."

"Oh, thank you! thank you! you think of everything. Then you are not going to London?"

"No," smiling, "not till next week."

Here Ellis turned sharp into the yard of the station and drew up. Beckoning a porter to hold the horse, he sprang down and assisted Marjory to alight, accompanying her into the ticket office to inquire, with the quiet ineffable air of authority which always impressed people, if the 12.20 train from London was generally punctual.

"No, sir, that she bain't," was the emphatic reply.

"Then is it worth while waiting now?" he asked Marjory.

"Oh, yes, I should like him to find me here."

It seemed hours to Marjory while she paced the platform or sought shelter from the sun in a dingy unswept waiting-room.

At length, quite ten minutes behind time, the ardently-expected train came in.

Marjory eagerly scanned the passengers as they alighted, and after a moment's uncertainty recognized a young man—taller and thinner than the George she remembered—dressed in a light-coloured check suit, with a rough blue coat over his arm and a small bag in his hand. The next moment her arms were round his neck.

"Oh, George! I thought you would never come."

"Why, Marjory, I didn't know you! You have grown quite an elegant young lady."

Then a few hurried questions and answers, and Marjory led him into the station yard. Ellis had not yet returned.

"We must wait a few minutes for the dog-cart. You have no more luggage?"

"Luggage! no. I had hard work to get a decent coat to come in, I can tell you. My father is stingier than ever."

"No, no! *He* is not to blame. But how thin you are, and how brown, and *how* you smell of tobacco!"

"I am sorry, Marge; but you see I was shut up with three fellows who were blowing clouds all the way down, so I was obliged to smoke too."

"You look ever so much older. Have you been miserable, dear?" pressing his arm fondly.

"Oh no, by no means, and I have got through the worst of it now. But if I had known exactly what I was going into, I don't think I should have been so ready to give up the Royal Navy."

"Ah! George, I am sure you have suffered fearfully."

"Nonsense, Marge, nothing of the sort; at any rate I am going to be very jolly here for the next few days. What sort of an old buffer is the uncle? I say, is this the trap?" as Ellis drove up.

"Yes, come along; we must not be late for luncheon."

"Well, you have him safe and sound," said Ellis good-humouredly. "Glad to see you; jump up behind." He stretched out his hand to Marjory, who was pleased at his unwonted cordiality, and they set off at a rapid pace.

CHAPTER XIV.

THEY THREE MEET AGAIN.

THAT afternoon and evening were ever graven on the tablets of Marjory's memory as curiously interwoven with pleasure and annoyance.

To stroll about the beautiful ruins and the picturesque grounds with George was delightful; to sit at table with him and Uncle Carteret was a sore trial.

George, in the first place, brought no dress-clothes—for the best

reason in the world, he had none to bring. Then he did not know the uses of many of the more luxurious implements of the table. As to the French dishes, knowledge was of small importance, as he ate indiscriminately of them all. He was in no way vulgar, Marjory told herself, but he was unconventional, and extremely shy, which, of course, encouraged Uncle Carteret to snub him.

Here Ellis did yeoman's service. He turned Uncle Carteret's stings aside with diplomatic dexterity, and covered George's occasional slips with the ægis of tact. Then he assumed an air of deep interest respecting colonial trade and the condition of the merchant service, on which topics the young sailor spoke intelligently enough.

But his hands! Poor Marjory could not keep her eyes away from them. They were rough and scarred and brown, and one or two nails were crushed and injured. He was still good-looking, even gentleman-like looking; but between him and Ellis what an immense gulf was fixed! The contrast irritated Marjory even while feeling warmly grateful to Ellis for his loyal help.

It was a relief to rise from table and escape both Uncle and Aunt Carteret's observing eyes; for even the latter, though polite and kind, evidently looked on their young guest as a kind of curiosity quite apart from her life. Marjory's heart went out to her brother all the more glowingly for these impalpable slights. He was—like herself—the victim of a destiny brought on them by her father's wife. If she could make it up to him in any way, she would have gone and lived with him in a hovel in a wilderness, where no one should mock at or undervalue him! her dear, kind, light-hearted brother.

Her feeling for him was tenderer and more compassionate than for Dick, warmly as she felt for him. He was so strong and resolute, he would conquer fortune if any man could. But George was different. Ellis noticed from time to time that her eyes filled, her colour changed, and then, with a brave effort, she would conquer herself and address her uncle, to distract his attention, or engage Mrs. Carteret on some subject that turned her thoughts from George's shortcomings.

It was an unfamiliar and a somewhat wearisome world to the ambitious *attaché*; but, so far, Marjory was an interesting study. She helped him through the dull time which he had devoted to the difficult and delicate task of persuading his old kinsman to make certain dispositions of his property which would be to the advantage of his heir-presumptive. He brought to his task some admirable qualities—patience, tenacity of purpose, an equable temper, a keen regard for his own interest. So he stayed, amiably, to talk with Mr. Carteret and further his special object, while George and Marjory—having asked and obtained leave to go and look at the sunset—set forth for a walk together.

With what delight they scampered off to the ruins, anxious to get well out of sight; and then they paused and found a seat where they could rest and pour out unchecked the experiences of what seemed to them the ages which had passed since last they met. George was more anxious to hear Marjory's history than to enlarge upon his own. He was ready enough to describe any pleasant adventures, any bright bits in his generally monotonous existence; but he did not care to talk about the trials and troubles of his first days on board a merchantman—though no doubt the life was luxurious, compared to that of his predecessors of twenty or thirty years before.

Then Marjory had the history of Dick's troubles to recount. The particulars had never reached George. Marjory could not bear to put on paper the accusation she felt to be so unmerited. George, therefore, had but an indistinct idea of the occurrence, which Marjory now described, even to the minutest details, and with a graphic power which astonished George, who was deeply indignant at the cruel treatment of his chum.

"I never could make out why he did not write to me," said George, when Marjory had finished her dramatic narration, "and now I begin to believe that Mrs. Acland is a bad lot."

"You begin to see through her at last," cried Marjory. "I used to think, sometimes, I was too bitter against her—that I was fanciful and unjust; but she gets worse and worse, or I get to know her better. I believe she hates Dick more than she does you or me. No! not worse than she hates *me*. I feel she cannot bear the sight of me. I suppose that is the reason I dislike her, really."

"Yes, no doubt. And you know, Marge, you can be horrid disagreeable."

"Say horridly, George. I daresay I can; but I fancy I am better-tempered now. I feel oftener sad than cross, and I am more sorry for people. I certainly feel that I should like to shake Uncle Carteret sometimes; *he* can be disagreeable! Still, I am grateful to him, and I could be quite happy with Aunt Carteret. I am not sure that she cares a straw about me, but she is always just, and so even in temper, I envy her. She is generous too. She gives me quantities of pretty things, and made Uncle Carteret buy all the nice clothes I have, instead of paying me for my services. I was never fit to be seen before."

"Well, you are quite fit to be seen now," said George, looking admiringly at his sister. "You have turned out quite a pretty girl, Marge; and you have a deuced nice figure."

"Have I? Do you really think so?" cried Marjory, delighted. "I used to be so afraid I should grow up ugly! If I am just pleasant-looking, I shall be content. Beauty is entrancing! I could look at a beautiful man or woman for ever! See,

George, my hands are not so red as they used to be," and she spread them out.

George nodded, and busied himself filling his pipe.

"Perhaps, Georgie dear, you think me nice because you have not seen me for a long time."

"May be so," said George philosophically, and began to puff.

"What nasty tobacco!" was Marjory's next remark. "Mr. Ellis has cigarettes that smell deliciously."

"I daresay he has; and he pays a delicious price for them. I am glad to get what I can; besides, I am used to it. The stronger the better, when you have the watch on a cold stormy night."

"I can imagine it," said Marjory tenderly, slipping her arm through his and hugging it.

"I suppose this Ellis is a regular high and mighty chap?" asked George condescendingly, permitting his sister's caress.

"I believe so. He is, or has been, *attaché* at Vienna; and Aunt Carteret says he will be an ambassador one day."

"No! Well, he has good manners, anyhow. He was helping me out of holes all dinner-time; and that old buffer Carteret was always thrusting me into them. Ellis is a good-natured fellow!"

"I am not so sure," said Marjory slowly, with a profound air. "I believe he could be cruel if he liked. I hated him when he came first. He oppressed me in an odd sort of way. Now I don't know whether I like him or not, though he has really been very good to me; but I think I am a little afraid of him. He gives me the idea of masked power."

"Oh, that's nonsense! He might have fallen in love with you, only he is rather old."

"In love with *me*!" and Marjory laughed, a light-hearted, natural, girlish laugh. "That is too funny an idea. What do you know about love, you silly boy?"

"A good deal," said George with much gravity, taking his pipe from his mouth. "I was awfully in love with a girl on the voyage out; she was such a lovely little creature, and I think—I think she noticed me, for she used to ask me to do things for her, and smile."

"Do you mean to say you never spoke to her?" asked Marjory.

"Well, she spoke to me once or twice; but you must remember it would be the height of presumption for an apprentice on board ship to talk to a lady passenger."

"I suppose so," said Marjory with a sigh, and she did not speak again for some minutes.

Then George began to talk confidentially of his hopes and plans. He was determined to stick to the calling he had adopted, though the life was very different from what he had expected. "It would not be a bad thing to command a steamer,

and I am getting on pretty well ; you see one must train in a sailing ship, but all the high-class merchant vessels are steamers now," &c., &c.

The soft darkness of a summer's night began to close round them before Marjory remembered it was time to return to the house. "Uncle Carteret will make a fuss, George ; we had better go in."

* * * * *

It is to be feared that Marjory did not give that undivided attention to the rector's sermon next day which it no doubt deserved.

She was watching the sky through an open window near the Priory pew, and hoping the fleecy grey clouds were not gathering for rain. If so, she would not be able to meet Dick as appointed, that is, if it rained heavily.

The gentlemen of the family were conspicuous by their absence. Old Mr. Carteret was an avowed freethinker, and disposed to flaunt his freedom of thought somewhat obtrusively, and Ellis saw no object to be gained by boring himself on Sunday mornings.

Mrs. Carteret therefore kept up the character of the establishment, and with her, of course, came Marjory and George.

Luncheon seemed preternaturally long that day. Uncle Carteret would talk and dawdle, while Marjory was dying to meet Dick and hear his history since they parted.

At last they rose from table, and Marjory murmured something to Mrs. Carteret, something about a walk and meeting her half-brother.

"You had better take umbrellas," said Mrs. Carteret, "the sky looks threatening."

"Yes," cried Mr. Carteret, who overheard, "do not be imprudent and take cold. Colds are the beginning of all kinds of disorders, and I am exceedingly afraid of infection in my frail health."

"I *will* take care, uncle," said Marjory, as she made her escape.

It was a soft grey day, the atmosphere a little oppressive, but trees, grass, flowers, shrubs, all gave out their fullest fragrance. The two young people walked somewhat silently along, ascended the hill behind the Priory and pursued the path which led by the wood to the village of Langford. Marjory's heart was very full at the idea of hearing Dick's story and of telling him her own. What hardships he must have undergone, but at least he looked well and cheerful. He would not fail to meet them? Even while the veiled doubt floated through her mind, a tall figure came round a bend of the path. George, with a shout that woke the echoes, sprang forward and clasped Dick's hand as the latter paused, his blue eyes beaming with pleasure, and a joyous smile showing his fine white teeth under his thick golden mous

tache. Marjory observed that he had not lost the look and bearing of a gentleman, that his morning suit of brown tweed was well cut and became him, that, in short, he had deteriorated less than George.

"Oh, Marjory, I thought you would not fail, but I little thought who would be with you. Why, where did you drop from, old chap?" While he spoke he held Marjory's hand, and stooping, kissed her cheek. Her first impulse was to throw her arms round him, but something in his movement checked her.

"Well, Dick, you look first-rate! You seem to have been getting on."

"Come back with me to where the trees lie," returned Dick; "we can sit down and have a regular good talk, we have no end to tell each other. I was here ever so much too soon, but I knew what a long affair Sunday dinner is, so I waited patiently. Why, Marjory, you have grown a grand young lady. I never was so amazed as when you flew over to me at Beaulieu."

"And I never was so delighted, except to see George."

"Come, Marge, you sit between us," said Dick, when they reached the resting-place he had chosen, and Marge quickly complied. First, young Cranston questioned them eagerly respecting home and their own adventures before he would speak of himself, listening with profoundest interest to all they had to tell.

"And has no suspicion ever arisen as to who was the real thief, as to who took the money I was charged with stealing," asked Dick at last with a frown.

"Not that I ever heard," returned Marjory; "in fact, it was never mentioned. Have you any idea?"

"Perhaps I have, but I don't want to talk about it," he said, a distressed look clouding his face. "It was a cruel business altogether. I shan't soon forget how I felt when I left you that day. How long ago is it, Marjory?"

"Nearly fifteen months."

"Well, it seems more than fifteen years. You were a trump to me, Marge," and he suddenly put his arm round her and hugged her against his side. "She gave me the money you sent her, George, nearly every penny she had. You don't know what a help it was to me, Marge," continued Dick, removing his arm; "I do not know how I should have got on without it, and I have saved as best I could to return it to you. I never intended to write to you or try to see you till I could return it. Here it is, Marge." He drew out a shabby purse and extracted some coins folded in paper, which he put in her hand, closing it forcibly on the little packet.

"No, no, Dick! I don't want it."

"Nor do I. Give me something to keep instead, just for a keepsake. No, Marge, there is no use in refusing; I will not take them back."

"Now get on like a good chap and tell us all about everything," cried George impatiently.

"Here goes then. You remember just before you sailed for Australia, George, I fell in with a man I had known when I was a little fellow away in the country—a man called Roper, a mason. He told me where he lived, and I walked over one Sunday to see him. He made a good deal of me, because I once waded into a stream and pulled out a baby girl he was very fond of. When my mother," he paused an instant, "when my mother tried to shove that theft upon me, and I felt I could never live under the same roof with her again, I went straight away to Roper. Of course I only told him that I had quarrelled with my people and couldn't stand the office; it would have been ruin to me if the true story had got out. Well, Roper was very kind. He got me a room close by them, I won't say much about it, it was by no means a dainty chamber; however, the rent was low. Then there was a difficulty about getting me work. You see masons, bricklayers, handicraftsmen of that kind, are hampered with rules about apprentices and unions and lots of things, so Roper could only give me labourer's work at first. I did not care so long as I could earn my bread. Soon, however, Roper—who was a master mason—was employed by a firm of builders on a large factory they were putting up at Lambeth, and then I got my chance. Roper was an uneducated man, and I was able to help him with measurements and accounts; then there were some crooked bits of masonry, and I made him a copy of the plans for his own private use. The clerk of the works noticed this, and often had me in to his office to help him, and I learned a good deal in that way. Unfortunately poor old Roper, though a good, well-meaning fellow, got a drinking fit every now and then. He spent a lot of money at these times, and his wife used to be in a dreadful state of mind. I helped him over some of these turns, and I think he grew ashamed of my seeing him. We were 'out' for a short time last winter, which made things a little hard, but we were better off than many others."

"Was it not trying, having no one of your own class to speak to?" asked Marjory, whose eager eyes seemed to drink in Dick's words.

"It was curious; but perhaps the worst thing of all was the want of books. It is no wonder that intelligent artisans devour newspapers and swallow all they assert. Some of them are shrewd enough, but for want of training and association their shrewdness runs wild. If I had not been among these men, I should never have known how much is learned from living with reasonable educated people. Book knowledge is only one means of information. I got on pretty well with the men. They were suspicious of me, because I was a little different from themselves, but I kept very quiet, and after a fight or two with one of the worst, and proving I

could hold my own, I did better, and I must say they are all ready to help one another when in trouble, with real generosity. When I could not get work I used to draw and copy plans, and design decorations and keep as busy as I could. In the spring, Roper had a lot of repairing and putting in new shop fronts to do and some odd work in gentlemen's houses, and he always wanted me, paying me fairly. At last, in the end of May, he was sent for by Carson and Humphries the builders, and engaged to do certain parts of the restorations down here at Beaulieu. It was quite delightful to get away to the sweet fresh country. Most of our men have their quarters at Gilston—which is nearer—but I have found a clean little place in the village down there."

"How long have you been here?" asked George.

"Nearly two months." Dick then went on to say that the same clerk of the works who had noticed him previously was employed at Beaulieu, and again took him to assist in his office, while he found opportunities for making himself useful to the architect as well. "Now," he recommenced after a short pause, "for the bit of good news I promised you. About a fortnight ago, I heard the architect and the clerk of the works in the office talking of a new man Lord Beaulieu had brought over from France to decorate the reception rooms in the modern part of the Castle. Mr. Jervis, the architect, said he believed he was an American, and a clever artist, and the clerk had just begun to say he was a foreigner, when they both stopped short, for a gentleman in a velveteen jacket, and very well got up altogether, walked in. You may guess how surprised I was when I saw he was the Mr. Brand who called, as I daresay you may remember, on the children's birthday, just before I came away last year."

"Is it possible! How extraordinary!" cried Marjory.

"He glanced at me, but took no further notice till he finished talking with the architect; then he came over and looked at what I was drawing. 'That's not bad,' he said; 'are you Mr. Revel's assistant?'"

"'Sometimes, not regularly,' I answered. He was silent for a minute, then he said, 'You might assist *me* too, when Revel can spare you; come and see me this evening, I am staying at the White Horse at Gilston.'"

"And you went?" asked George.

"I did, though I did not half like it; I was afraid he might put my mother on the scent. I found I had nothing to fear however. I can't tell you how kind and pleasant he was. He had recognized me at once, but did not say so till he heard my story. He questioned me pretty close, and seemed puzzled. Then we talked, and somehow I was greatly taken with him. He knows a lot about art, and he seems to have been a fast friend of my father's. He did not say much about Mrs. Acland, but I don't fancy he likes her. At last he said that for my father's sake he

would help me. Then he gave me some designs he had sketched, and told me how to elaborate them. I was to work them up, and take them to him when I considered them fit for inspection. The upshot was that he left the inn at Gilston, and has taken lodgings in the village near mine, and now he has spoken to Lord Beaulieu, and I am to be his assistant regularly. He calls it his apprenticeship, only I have bargained for two evenings a week to help Roper. This was settled the very day you saw me among the workmen. You see you brought me luck, Marge."

"I hope I did. What sort of a man is this Mr. Brand?"

"First, before everything else, he is a gentleman! It is wonderful to hear him talk sometimes; then again, he is terribly depressed. I rather fancy he used to take opium, and he is trying to do without it. Anyway he is a wonderful draughtsman. He does not seem to like being alone, and has me in nearly every evening to draw, and to talk with him. I believe he met Lord Beaulieu long ago in America, and then again last spring at some place he has near the Pyrenees; but Brand is a thorough Englishman, I am certain. Yesterday morning, I began to work on the decorations of the dining-room, with Brand. It will be splendid! In short, I feel I have my foot on the ladder, and it will go hard if I don't creep up a tolerable height. Ah! if I had only been trained early, I should have no fear, as it is I shall get on slower."

"Well, you have been in luck," cried George; "then you are a clever chap, and that counts for a good deal."

"I can only work in a particular line; I should have been nowhere as a lawyer."

"It is quite like a novel," said Marjory, gazing dreamily away over the fields and swelling upland that lay spread before them. "Suppose this Mr. Brand turns out to be a nobleman, or a millionaire in disguise, and gives you a fortune?"

Dick laughed (how pleasant his laugh was). "I do not think Brand has ever been troubled with much money," he said, "but he may help me to make a tolerably good position. I am sure he has a history, a painful history."

"I should like to see him again. I remember his face," exclaimed Marjory. "He looks ill and thin, does he not? and he has a sweet voice?"

Dick nodded. After some discussion and conjectures respecting the story to which they had listened, Dick asked Marjory if she were likely to remain with her grand-uncle.

She shook her head. "I fear not! I gather from what they say, that Mr. Ellis is persuading Mr. Carteret to sell the Priory; and at any rate, my uncle will not stay later than October. Neither he nor my aunt have ever said a word about taking me abroad with them. I don't think they care enough for any one to put themselves out of the way, so I am almost sure I shall have to go home. How I hate the idea! You will write to me, will you not, Dick?"

You will let me know where you are and what you are doing; I can always get your letters without Mrs. Acland seeing."

"Of course I will write to you, Marge, but you need not hide my letters; you have a right to have them, and now I have regular work I do not fear my mother meddling with me."

Then they rose and walked to the beginning of the village, where Dick turned and went back with George and Marjory. Time flew fast and the dinner-hour drew near; still they were far from having exhausted all they had to say.

"I am so glad, Dick, that you have been able to get some nice clothes," said Marjory, as they paused near the Priory to say a final adieu.

"Don't you recognize these garments?" asked Dick, holding out his arm for her inspection. "They were new just before I left Falkland Terrace. I was almost ashamed of taking them with me, but I had worked pretty well at the office for a year, and I was to have had some pay at Easter, which I did not get, so I carried them off. It was not your father's fault, Marge; he is naturally kind and generous."

"Not to me!" cried George. "He never gives me a rap."

"I will walk towards the village next Sunday. Will you come and meet me?" asked Marjory.

"Yes, without fail, rain or shine."

"Oh, if it is wet, it would be no use. I dare not go out."

At last they said good-bye, and parted.

The evening was something direful in its leaden dulness. George found a book, and Marjory was upheld by the memory of Dick's delightful story. Before bed-time the brother and sister contrived a *tête-à-tête* ramble through the grounds, in the course of which Marjory insisted on sharing her newly-recovered store with him.

Next day, her brief pleasure was over. After a broken morning, the young sailor, with wet eyes which he tried hard to conceal, bid farewell to his weeping sister, who accompanied him on foot half way to Gilston, and returned in a state of the deepest depression, much increased by the absence of Ellis, who had started early for London, which looked to Marjory very much as if he had really postponed his visit to please her.

CHAPTER XV.

A BREATHING SPACE.

THE cottage in which Brand had taken up his abode stood at the entrance of the village and was of a better class than the rest. It belonged to the bailiff of the Langford estate, who was well pleased to let a couple of rooms to a liberal tenant, while his neat,

active wife exerted her simple culinary skill to the utmost to tempt the variable and indifferent appetite of the strange gentleman who spoke "so civil like."

The sun had set but it was still light, on the Sabbath succeeding the one when Marjory had enjoyed the interview with her two brothers.

Brand had been sitting in the garden reading and smoking and had now retired from the dews of evening to his parlour.

He had had a sleepless night and a weary day from neuralgic pains, and was beginning to feel his own company rather tiresome, when an approaching step caught his ear. He laid down his book, and listened with an expectant expression. In another minute a tap on the door elicited "Come in," from the listener, and Dick Cranston entered with a roll of paper under his arm.

"Ah! there you are. I thought you did not mean to come. I have had an awful time of it."

"I am very sorry," with a sympathetic inquiring look. "You see I was working all the morning at that plan you suggested for the addition near the west tower—I have brought it with me—and then I went to meet Marjory Acland, my sister, you know."

"Your sister, eh?" languidly. "Let me see what you have made of the plan. Pull back the curtains and put the table in the window."

For some time they discussed the drawing earnestly, Brand pointing out errors, while evidently pleased with the work.

"You've the making of an architect in you," said he, after looking silently at the plan for a moment or two, "but of course you have a great deal to learn. How old do you say you are?"

"I was twenty my last birthday."

"You were twenty-one!" said Brand sharply. "I remember drinking your health the day you were born."

"Did you know my father so long ago?" asked Dick.

"I knew him before that, my boy. I knew him in all his troubles, a good many of which were his own fault, but I need not talk of them to his son; and he had a heart withal."

"He must have had some good points, or *you* would not have stuck to him as you did," said Dick sadly. "It seems rather hard that death should have taken my father, and some intolerable quality or other in myself, I suppose, disgusted my mother; at any rate, I am pretty well alone."

"Never mind, you are all the freer to work your way up. I don't think you have much to lament. Just fight for your own hand in the battle of life. I never could understand the art of getting on. My own movements, after reaching a certain point, have been retrograde. It is curious how some fellows—fellows that seem to know life well too, and can work, fail for want of that indescribable something which enables them to grasp fortune when the jade shows symptoms of fickleness! There's a flaw

somewhere in them—sometimes it's generosity, or a weak reluctance to press before another, or an instant's self-distrust—a want of the hard self-reliance that insists on having a try anyhow, hit or miss, and don't care a hang if people sneer about presumption. I wonder what will become of you, Dick? I am half afraid you are not hard enough to succeed."

Dick smiled. "I am not wildly ambitious," he said, "but somehow I do not fear the future. I think I can work and wait. I may never rise high, but I think I can win independence, and there is great pleasure in a simple life."

"May you always think so!" ejaculated Brand. "I believe you are made of stronger stuff than your father. He had plunged deep into difficulties and succumbed to a lot of temptations by the time he was twenty-one. Well, I shall do all I can to help you, but I don't think there is a great deal of time before me. I feel awfully weak to day. Tell me, how does your mother get on with her step-children?"

"With George well enough, but with Marjory—no! she was always irreconcilable. There seems to be an antagonism between them. Marjory was awfully bitter against me, too, when I first went to live with them; she could not speak a civil word to me. I suppose it was natural for her to object to an intruder, but it made things hard to bear."

"She must be a cantankerous young lady."

Dick shook his head. "She is, or was, quick-tempered, but there is not a truer-hearted girl in England," he said warmly. "Then she speaks so honestly! Whatever she says is what she really believes at the time. Hard as she was to me, I was sorry when she went to school, though George and I were better friends when she went away."

"She has a nice head," said Brand musingly, "and a speaking face—as well as I remember."

"It was shameful," resumed Dick, "the length of time she was left at school and the way she was kept there, as far as I can make out as a pupil teacher. I always felt angry with Mr. Acland for that, depriving her and George of everything."

"Ah!" said Brand. "Well, she came round to you?"

"Yes; she behaved like a trump to me when I left my step-father's house. I think she likes me nearly as well as George. If I could ever make a home for her I *should* be glad, for she will never stay in her father's house. I am sometimes half afraid of the future for her—she is hasty and impetuous, and might do something rash."

"Won't old Carteret keep her?"

"She does not think so."

"Bring me the tobacco-jar, my pipe is empty. Take my advice, Dick, don't go to meet her for a couple of Sundays. It has a queer look, a young lady like Miss Acland rambling through

the country with a workman—for that is all you seem at present—and people are ready to talk ill-naturedly, especially country people.”

Dick coloured quickly. “But if they know we are brother and sister?” he exclaimed.

“Ay! but they don’t know; and indeed you are no relations whatever.”

“No? Not even half-brother and sister?”

“No, stupid boy, of course not! Her father’s younger children are her half-brother and sister.”

Dick was silent and thoughtful for a minute. “Then you really think I ought not to take a walk with her every Sunday?”

“I certainly think you had better not.”

“It was something to look forward to all the week,” said Dick regretfully.

“Very likely.”

“And she will be disappointed, too.”

“No doubt.”

“I must write her a line to say I shall not be able to meet her.”

“Do so,” returned Brand, “and as I have not been spending any money lately I shall hire a trap and we will drive over to D—, it is not more than seventeen miles, and see the cathedral, it is a poem in stone.”

“Thank you,” said Dick soberly. “I wish Marjory could come with us.”

“I am sure I should have no objection,” returned Brand, “but fate forbids such things to be.”

There was silence while he filled his pipe.

“Stay and have some supper with me,” resumed Brand; “I don’t care to be alone, and I don’t suppose you have anything better to do.”

“I never have anything half so pleasant to do,” said Dick warmly.

“Not even walking with your—sister?”

“It is a different kind of pleasure, though a great pleasure; but it is like getting into another world to talk with you.”

“God help you, boy!” smiling, yet heaving a deep sigh, “you had better keep out of my world. Here is supper, and thank heaven I feel inclined for it.”

The landlady, with an occasional word of inquiry, or a remark on the weather and the crops, set forth the table with cold chicken, home-made bread, and a tongue of her own curing. Brand produced a bottle of claret from the cupboard, and invited his young friend to fall to.

Presently the lamp was lit and Dick’s host brightened up as his custom was at night. How well he talked! He had read and seen much; he had whimsical theories on many subjects, not rigid

convictions, but light airy fancies, which could be floated hither and thither as the Japanese performers waft paper butterflies by the motion of their fans. Then art was a prolific topic, on which Dick was never wearied of hearing him enlarge, and through all there sounded an undertone of kindest interest in Dick himself, in all that he remembered, all he hoped or feared, or longed to attempt, which drew the young man to him irresistibly. "You do not drink wine," he said at last; "would you like some beer, or have you adopted the 'Blue Ribbon?'"

"No, I have taken no pledge, but as water costs nothing, I stick to it, and find I want no more."

"I daresay you are right; yet there is a certain, I was going to say intellectual, loss in not being able to appreciate a glass of good wine, but that is rather too strong. I always liked it myself, though I never drank hard. Nor did your father, and he was driven sometimes to seek oblivion at any price. His greatest temptation was opium."

"At all events he was cut off from temptation tolerably early," said Dick with feeling. "I often fancy I should have been fond of him, if he had come back. My mother never encouraged me to lavish my affection on her. Now, when I hear your voice it brings a sort of hazy recollection with it—a dim remembrance of climbing on a man's knee and rubbing my cheek against a soft beard."

"Do you remember that?" murmured Brand in a low tone, setting down the glass he was lifting to his lips. "Ah, yes, I was constantly with your father in those days."

Both were silent for a while, then Brand, rousing himself with an effort, said, "Those rooms will be ready for occupation the end of the week. I hope the fair widow will approve."

"She is Lord Beaulieu's sister?" asked Dick.

"Yes, young Maynard was a great catch, and the Honourable Miss Saville had no money. Her elder sister is married to the rector of a country parish. I believe Mrs. Maynard is a beauty."

"You seem to know a great deal about people as well as things," said Dick, looking at him admiringly.

"Ah, well, your father used to tell me a great deal about the upper ten in old days, and since I returned from America I have had occasion to make some inquiries about the Beaulieu family."

"But you are not American?"

"Oh, I scarcely know what I am; cosmopolite before everything. Look here, Dick, I have one or two plans in my head; for you, I mean. There is Jervis the architect. I want to get you into his office for a while, only I am afraid he will ask a premium, and I don't care for your going through a regular apprenticeship. He has a great name, and you could pick up a

good deal from him; still if he lets you in for nothing, I do not see how you are to live without pay. I will speak to Lord Beaulieu."

"Pray do not ask him for any money help," cried Dick, red-denying.

Brand laughed. "Don't be afraid, I will keep up your dignity; but from time immemorial it has been the proud privilege of great nobles to assist struggling genius. We must not deprive our worthy employer of his rights, especially as he is a capital fellow. His artistic Bohemian life in early days has done him a world of good."

"He is wonderfully frank and nice to his employés."

"Yes, it is a comfort to work for a man who knows what work is. By the way, there was a scraggy Scotchman at the Castle for a few days last week; did you see him?"

"I believe so. He was admiring the library and the big drawing-room when I passed through."

"He was greatly taken with the decorations. It seems he has been restoring an old family seat he bought back—he made a heap of money in China, I hear—and he has asked me to undertake the decorations. I hesitated, for the place is close to Edinburgh, and I hate the climate. However, the work will be in doors, and I don't know exactly what may turn up for the winter. This man's house will not be ready for me till October. Then in the spring I am in hopes Lord Beaulieu will renovate that old château of his in Dauphiny; it would be a delightful job, and if it can be managed I'll take you with me, Dick."

The young man's eyes sparkled. "You will! Why that is something beyond my highest hopes."

Brand took his pipe from his lips, and said with some emotion, "I'd do a good deal for your father's son; besides, I am under obligations to yourself, but you can't understand this. Now I am horridly tired, and I want to get a thorough rest and be fresh for a hard day's work to-morrow, so good-night. You can stay on here if you like, there are books and light." With a nod and a kindly smile he left the room.

Dick, who rose as he said good-night, drew a chair to the open window and fell into thought. His luck had certainly turned. What a wonderful piece of good fortune it was to have fallen in with a man like Brand; this at least was a legacy from his poor wandering, unthrifty, much-abused father. What a strong friendship must have existed between them; such faithfulness could hardly exist between two worthless men. But Brand, whatever his past life, and Dick instinctively felt it had been most irregular, was not worthless. At any rate such unearned kindness as he had heaped upon him should secure his warmest gratitude, his unstinted service.

If he was thus willing to associate him (Dick) in his work,

the long and toilsome way which lay before him would be wondrously smoothed and levelled—and what joy in the kind of work destined to fill his days! The young man's heart glowed with hope and delightful anticipation, only he wished Brand had not warned him against those Sunday rambles with Marjory. It was surprising how much more he enjoyed talking with Marjory than he used. No doubt she had grown gentler, more womanly and wiser than she used to be—that might be expected; but her bright observant remarks, her gleams of pathos, of kindly consideration, these were beyond what her early impetuous sauciness promised. How amusing she could be too; a pleasanter companion no brother could have. Brand might say what he liked, they would always be like brother and sister. It was hard to give up seeing her save at rare intervals, still there was truth in what Brand said. The apparent difference between his position and that of Marjory was so great as to make their being alone together an impropriety, especially as he must not explain their relationship. Well, not relationship, the connection between them—and Dick's cheek burned as he thought of the coarse misconstruction his fellow-workmen would put upon their acquaintance, should any of them meet him sauntering along with Marge. Dick's reflections here became confused and disturbing, so he turned his thoughts to George, and speculated how soon his chum would write to him, as he said he would whenever anything was settled about his going to sea.

Finally Dick extinguished the lamp and went wandering in the moonlight along the path towards the Priory, in a pleasant dreamy state of mind, full of vague bright hopes, of soft kindly fancies, seeing a delicious vista of possible success—distant certainly, but not beyond his reach.

The arrival of the Honourable Mrs. Maynard with her baby, her nurse, her maid, and a German courier, created a little stir in Lord Beaulieu's provisional household; but to the troop of workmen without it made no difference.

Lord Beaulieu was glad to direct his sister's attention to the improvements he was making.

Perhaps, in her present depressed condition, when few things possessed any interest whatever for her, the restoration of the family seat was more calculated than anything else to divert her thoughts from their ordinary sorrowful mood.

She seemed to enjoy, in a languid fashion, walking slowly round the terrace and through the courtyard, leaning on her brother's arm and listening to his explanations. Nurse and the baby were generally of the party, as the poor young mother could scarcely bear the child out of her sight.

He was a fine, fair, chubby infant of nearly four months old—full to the lips with abounding life, ready to jump out of his nurse's arms at every fresh object presented to his wandering eyes

—a perfect miracle of precocious intelligence to his admiring mother.

Though Mrs. Maynard shrank from society, it amused her faintly to talk with the architect, or discuss the harmony of colour with Brand, whom she noticed a good deal.

"That Mr. Brand is really quite a gentleman," she said to her brother, "and what taste he has! He was speaking to baby yesterday, and baby quite took to him. It is amazing to see such a mere infant showing distinct likings and dislikings. Yesterday I found him (I mean Mr. Brand) making a sketch in water colours of the western tower and a bit of landscape beyond—really exquisitely done! so I asked him if he could take likenesses, and added that I should be glad if he would paint baby. He was so frank and honest about it. He said it was too soon, that a month or two hence the darling would have more expression, and then he said he would like to paint him as the infant Hercules."

Lord Beaulieu smiled. "He is a clever fellow, but rather erratic. I met him some five or six years ago in South America, when he helped me in a slight difficulty, and for a week or two I saw a good deal of him; he seemed in a very unsettled state then, and what we used to term, in my own Bohemian days, 'down on his luck.' Then I met him last winter at Fleury St. Jean, the little town near my quarters in Dauphiny. He had been sketching there all the autumn, and was delayed by illness, bad cold, and low fever, so I looked after him a bit, and found him a pleasant well-informed fellow; though he was evidently much better off than when we met him in America, he was glad to find work, so I engaged him to do the decorations here, and I think I made a hit. Ah! Brand!" coming on him as they began to descend some steps leading to the shrubbery in the moat. "We have been talking of you. Mrs. Maynard tells me you have been making some sketches, very good sketches."

"Very slight things, Lord Beaulieu. As this is the men's dinner-hour I came down here to get some of the noontide effects on the side of the moat, and that mass of masonry that used to support the drawbridge. You see there is an oblique light upon it that brings out the ruggedness of the stones and their peculiar tints wonderfully."

"You are right. What a beautifier light is—set to work, or you will lose the effect."

Brand had already seated himself on a fragment of stone projecting from the bank, and settled his sketch-book on his knee.

Mrs. Maynard and her brother watched him for a few minutes, when Dick came down the path behind them, and raising his hat asked leave to pass, as he had a message for Mr. Brand. It was from the clerk of the works respecting some new staging which was to be put up in one of the rooms for the purpose of painting

the ceilings. Brand gave a few directions, and giving an eager glance at the sketch in progress, Dick, with another bow and lifting of his hat, sped back again.

"Who is that young man?" asked Mrs. Maynard. "I have noticed him several times. He is very good-looking, and even aristocratic-looking. It is very strange, but his face always seems familiar to me. Where could I have seen him? Who is he?"

"He is a very superior young fellow," returned Lord Beaulieu. "Brand, who seems to have adopted him, knew his people."

"Who is he, Mr. Brand? Not an ordinary workman, I am sure."

"No!" said Brand quickly, as he bent over his drawing. "His father was an artist, and an old comrade of mine; he died, or rather was drowned, early, and this boy had such a passion for architecture that he ran away from home to be a mere labourer among masons, so as to get the rudiments of the art he craves for."

"How very curious. Do you think he will succeed?"

"Yes, with a little judicious help."

"What is his name?" asked Mrs. Maynard.

"Cranston," returned Brand shortly.

"Cranston," she repeated. "How very odd, Cranston is one of the Maynard names."

"Oh! my old comrade was a South of England man, had no connection with the north; in fact, poor fellow, I doubt if he could claim any relations at all."

"Ah!" said Mrs. Maynard, and dropped the subject, fancying that Dick's father might have been illegitimate.

"Come," said Lord Beaulieu. "I want to get luncheon over soon, and take you for a drive to the Priory. We have not returned Mrs. Carteret's visit."

(To be continued.)

BEAUMARCHAIS.

By JOSEPH FORSTER.

BEAUMARCHAIS was born at Paris, in 1732, and was the son of a clock maker. He became a great favourite with the daughters of Louis XVI., who admired his musical talents.

I will introduce my subject by a few words on Beaumarchais's famous lawsuit.

Fifteen thousand pounds were left to him. The heir of the rest of the property, the Comte de la Blache, disputed the will. Beaumarchais won the first action. Then, improvident and daring as usual, he ran away with the mistress of a duke.

To prevent a duel, the duke and Beaumarchais were confined in prison—not the same, of course. While Beaumarchais was off the scene, the Comte de la Blache moved heaven and earth, and a worse place, against our unheroic hero. He seized his furniture, ruined him with law expenses, which was not difficult then, and is not difficult now. So that Beaumarchais, from the height of prosperity and fortune, was flung down into poverty and despair. His condition was so pitiable, that as he said, “he felt shame and pity for himself.” Beaumarchais was then forty years of age, his reputation was a little doubtful, and his genius was unknown. He was at bay, conquered, and apparently crushed; he was accused by his enemy of every possible enormity, inclusive of having poisoned his two wives; it was necessary that he should display energy, wit, genius; and he displayed them.

Beaumarchais was allowed to leave his prison for a few days. His judge was a M. Gusman, who was deeply engaged for the other side. Beaumarchais tried to get at him, but could not succeed. He was told that his wife was get-at-able, and if bribed might influence her husband. He sent her one hundred louis in gold, and fifteen louis in silver, and a gold watch set with diamonds. This present was given to obtain an audience of the judge, with the understanding that all should be returned if the case was lost. It was lost, and all was returned except the fifteen louis in silver.

Then our clever friend began to complain in a way that attracted and riveted attention.

The foolish judge, who perhaps did not know all the details, accused Beaumarchais of trying to corrupt him.

Then Beaumarchais published his account of the whole affair, written in a style which excited and amused the public. These

memoirs glittered with wit, malice, and a kind of boyish gaiety and apparent simplicity, that was a new thing in literature. Listen to what Voltaire said of them.

"I have read all the *Memoirs of Beaumarchais*. I was never so much amused. I begin to think that that brilliant madcap has some reason against all the world. What trickeries! Oh, heaven! what horrors! What a man!" exclaimed he again. "He combines everything—pleasantry, reason, gaiety, force, pathos, all kinds of eloquence, and he does not appear to search for any of these qualities, yet he confounds his adversaries and gives lessons to his judges. His simplicity enchants me; I forgive him his imprudences and his freaks of temper."

These imprudences and freaks of temper, according to Voltaire, were those of a passionate man, in the extremest danger, justly irritated, but naturally very agreeable and very eloquent.

"It is absurd to accuse such a man of having poisoned his wives, he is too gay and too amusing for that."

The scene at the examination of Madame Gusman is deliciously funny. In her examinations by Beaumarchais, he made her say black was white, he enraged her and appeased her; when she did not know what else to say, nor how to disentangle her contradictions, she accounted for all by indisposition; when he pushed her too far, she threatened to box his ears; when he complimented her by saying that she only appeared eighteen instead of thirty, she smiled upon him, finding him no longer impertinent, and even went the length of asking him to conduct her to her carriage.

I must conclude this part of my subject by Beaumarchais' portrait of himself.

"And you who have known me, you who have followed me always, my friends, say if you have ever seen anything in me than a man constantly gay; loving with an equal power, study and pleasure; inclined to raillery, but without bitterness; and even welcoming it from others against myself when seasoned with wit; sustaining, perhaps with too much ardour, his opinion when he believes it just, but honouring emphatically, and without envy, all those he recognizes as superior; easy on his interests, even to negligence; active when he is spurred, idle and stagnant after the storm; careless when happy, but pushing constancy and serenity in misfortune to a degree that astonishes his most familiar friends."

The "*Barber of Seville*" was first represented on February 23rd, 1775. The public, on the faith of those who had heard the piece read, expected so much wit and fun that it was at first disappointed. Besides, the play was too long. Beaumarchais reduced the five acts to four. He removed the fifth wheel from the coach; it then rattled along as never a piece rattled before. When Beaumarchais published it he entitled the play: "*The Barber of*"

Seville, Comedy in Four Acts, Represented and Condemned at the Theatre of the Comédie Française."

At first Figaro was 'not the caustic, philosophical personage we know so well. Beaumarchais' idea was: "Giving rein to my gay character, I have attempted in my 'Barber of Seville' to restore to the theatre that frank, open gaiety, in allying it with the light tone of our pleasantry of to-day; but as even that was a kind of novelty, the piece was bitterly opposed. It appeared that I had shaken the State." The piece does not hang fire for a moment. It glitters; it sparkles; it has the irony of Voltaire, with some of the breadth of Rabelais. Figaro is as much a creation as Don Quixote or Mephistopheles. Its fault is almost too much wit—but that is so rare a fault, that in a comedy it becomes a virtue. Beaumarchais once spoke of a man "who had much wit, but economised it a little too carefully." That is what Beaumarchais never did. In that respect he resembled Sheridan, who puts jewels of wit and glittering epigrams into the mouths of the servants. Still there are always plenty of dull, stupid plays to be seen when one feels surfeited by the wit of a Beaumarchais and a Sheridan. Bad plays are always with us. "The Marriage of Figaro" was written in 1775 or 1776. But it required more wit to get it played than to write it. He had against him the king, the magistrates, the lieutenant of police, and all the great officials. Do you wonder? Listen to this:

"FIGARO.—I was born for a courtier.

"SUSANNAH.—People say it is a very difficult business.

"FIGARO.—Receive, take, and ask for more; there is the secret in three words."

Then the consummate astuteness of the man; he tries to disarm wrath by saying: "Only little men fear little writings."

Figaro on politics says: "To pretend to be ignorant of what one knows, of knowing all when one knows nothing; of understanding what one does not comprehend, of not hearing what one hears very well; to pretend to power beyond one's forces; make a grand mystery of hiding nothing; to shut oneself up to cut pens; to appear very profound, when one is only void and hollow; to play ill or well the great man; employ spies and pension traitors; to soften the seals of letters; and try to ennoble the poverty of the means by the importance of the object: if these are not the secret of politics, let me die."

Let us listen to Figaro on law and lawyers: "The custom, Mr. Doublefee, is often an abuse; the client, if not altogether a fool, knows his own case better than certain advocates, who in a cold perspiration shout and gesticulate, and knowing everything, except the leading facts of the case, embarrass themselves as little about ruining their client as boring the audience and sending the judges to sleep. After which performance they are more conceited than if they had composed the *oratio pro Murena*."

There is a fine passage in the "Marriage of Figaro," where the countess says:

"I feel so bewildered that I cannot connect two ideas."

Susannah replies:

"Ah! madame, quite the contrary; and it is that which teaches me how the refinements of the best society enable ladies of your position to tell falsehoods with such exquisite grace that it is impossible to discover them."

Then the dialogue with Marceline, of whom Figaro had borrowed money, and promised to marry her if he could not repay it. As you are aware, Marceline turns out to be Figaro's mother. Marceline, in speaking of the faults of her past life, says:

"Yes, my life has been deplorable, and more so even than you believe. I do not deny my faults, to-day has proved them. But it is very hard to expiate them after thirty years of repentance. I was born with good dispositions, and I acted on them so soon as my reason asserted itself. But in the age of folly and illusions, of inexperience and of need, when tempters surround one, and cruel poverty stabs—what has a girl to oppose to such enemies? Those who perhaps have ruined ten unfortunate people judge us severely.

"FIGARO.—The most guilty are often the least generous.

"MARCELINE (excitedly).—Men, more than ungrateful, who brand by their contempt the playthings of their passions, it is you who should be punished for the errors of our youth; you and your magistrates, so vain of the right to judge us, and who take away from us, by their guilty negligence, all honest means of existence. There is hardly an occupation left for women. Their right to provide for the ornamentation of their own sex is denied them; thousands of the other sex rob them of honest work.

"FIGARO (angrily).—Even the soldiers are allowed to sew.

"MARCELINE (passionately).—In the highest ranks women only obtain a contemptuous consideration; pleased by the apparent flattery, but undergoing real servitude; treated as minors in our rights, but as majors for our faults! Ah, under all these aspects your conduct creates horror or pity."

The "Marriage of Figaro" was first performed on September 26th, 1783. Beaumarchais had tried again and again to put this masterpiece of wit, wisdom, and irony on the stage. On June 12th, 1783, he had made every preparation for its performance. The tickets were issued, a file of carriages were at the doors, when Louis XVI. sent express orders to the actors not to perform the piece. To this order of the king, Beaumarchais, enraged beyond measure, exclaimed: "Well, gentlemen, if the king will not have it performed here, I swear, that rather than not play it, it shall be acted in the choir of Notre Dame."

Rebellion was in the air. Genius defied prerogative; that is the prerogative of genius.

But after delay upon delay, extending over years, the first night came. I ought to say that Beaumarchais, one of the most astute men who ever breathed, had read the piece to all the most important and influential people in Paris. He had tickled with consummate tact their curiosity.

The first performance was not attended by the queen, only through illness, but the Count d'Artois and the Duchesse de Polignac were there. The flower of the French aristocracy came to laugh and applaud a piece which led as much as anything to their ruin by rendering them contemptible and ridiculous. An eyewitness said: "Beaumarchais was intoxicated with excitement, and when some of us complained of the heat, instead of having the windows opened he broke them with his cane, so that people said after the piece that he doubly broke the glasses."

There we have the man—ardent, passionate, daring. Beaumarchais once said, "An author means a darer."

Strengthened by his success, Beaumarchais persuaded the comedians to perform his piece again, and was only stopped by the lieutenant of police.

At last, the 27th April, 1784, the piece was played in Paris.

The following account is from some memoirs of the day:

"To-day must have been a great day for Beaumarchais, who loves noise and scandal" [he loved a good advertisement], "for he had the satisfaction of drawing in his train not only the ordinary curious public and lovers of the stage, but the whole Court, princes of the blood, princes of the royal family; of receiving forty letters in one hour from gentlemen of all conditions asking for orders and to be allowed the honour of applauding him; of seeing Madame the Duchesse de Bourbon send her footman for tickets at eleven o'clock in the morning, although the office would not be open till four in the afternoon; of seeing decorated noblemen elbowing lacqueys in trying to get tickets; of seeing ladies of title, forgetting all decency and all modesty, shut themselves in the boxes of the actresses in the morning, and dine there under their protection, in the hope of being first; of seeing at last the guard at the theatre dispersed, the doors battered in, the iron bars give way and break under the efforts of the assailants."

"More than one duchesse," said Grimm, "thought herself very fortunate to obtain a seat in the balcony, where ladies are usually ashamed to be seen, on a wretched stool by the side of 'unfortunate females.'"

"Three hundred persons," said La Harpe, "have dined at the Comédie in the boxes of the actors, so as to be sure of having places, and at the opening of the doors the crush was so great that three persons were stifled."

This piece was played over one hundred times, and was a great political and social event, and led to other more important social and political events, as we know.

The "Barber of Seville" was gay, brilliant, witty, and amusing. The "Marriage of Figaro" is bitter, caustic, ironical. Napoleon said of it: "It was the Revolution already in action." La Harpe said of it: "It is easy to conceive the delight of a public charmed to amuse itself at the expense of authority, which allows itself to be ridiculed on the boards." But what did the gay, frivolous, gilded flies of fashion care, except to be amused, about the caustic irony and bitter wit of the dialogue? It was a new sensation to people who had given up all hope of obtaining another. The same people ran after Rousseau's "Julie," in spite of its scorn and contempt for them and their doings. Beaumarchais stabbed and tickled them; they only laughed. They seemed to agree with the doctor in "Figaro": "My faith! sir, men having only to choose between stupidity and folly, where I do not see profit I would have pleasure; so live, pleasure! Who knows if the world will last three weeks longer?"

The old order of things in France might have lasted many years longer if its members had not listened that night, and a hundred more nights, with transport to that gay, brilliant, insolent mockery of itself—if it had not taken a great part in its own undoing. Society was rotten. Beaumarchais, in the wittiest way, told it such was the case; and the audience agreed with him, and admired his penetration in finding it out and his wit in displaying it so amusingly.

Let me here introduce a few of Beaumarchais' sallies from the "Barber."

The first is at that charmingly-managed meeting of Figaro and Almaviva under the windows of Rosina's abode. Figaro has formerly been employed by the Count Almaviva. In the course of conversation Figaro says:

"I thought myself too happy in being forgotten, persuaded as I am that a great man does one enough good when he does not do one any harm.

"ALMAVIVA.—You were a wild fellow when in my service.

"FIGARO.—Eh, *Mon Dieu*, my lord, would you wish a poor man to be without faults?

"ALMAVIVA.—You were idle, dissipated.

"FIGARO.—From the virtues people exact from a servant, does your excellency know many masters who are worthy to be valets?"

Then Figaro tries his fortune as a dramatic author. He thus describes his failure:

"In truth I know not how it was I did not succeed, because I filled the pit with excellent workers; hands to clap (I had forbidden gloves, canes, all which would deaden the applause); and on my honour, before the performance the *café* had shown the best disposition towards me. But the efforts of the cabal—

"ALMAVIVA.—Ah! the cabal. The author fell?

"FIGARO.—Just like another. Why not? They hissed me. But my good angel has caused me to find my old master. I left Madrid because I saw that the republic of letters was made up of wolves, always armed one against the other and given up to the contempt to which this ridiculous ferocity conducts them—all the insects, the mosquitoes, the envious, the penny-a-liners, the critics, the publishers, the censors, and all other parasites which attach themselves to the skin of the unhappy literary man and finish by dissecting him and devouring the little substance which remains; tired of writing, tired of myself, disgusted with others, buried in debt and without cash; at last convinced that the useful revenue of the razor is preferable to the vain honours of the pen, I quitted Madrid, and, my baggage on my back, travelled philosophically over the two Castilles, La Mancha, La Estramadura, the Sierra Morena, the Andalusias; welcomed in one town, imprisoned in another, and everywhere superior to events; praised by these, blamed by those; enjoying good times, supporting the bad; laughing at fools, defying the wicked; you find me at last established at Seville, and ready to serve your excellency in all that it may please him to order.

"ALMAVIVA.—Who has given you so gay a philosophy?

"FIGARO.—The custom of misfortune. I am eager to laugh at all for fear of being obliged to weep."

I think even in the brightest touches of Figaro's wit you will find a vein of sadness, as in the last quotation. But the grand soliloquy of Figaro in the "Marriage"—when the poor fellow thinks the count has an appointment with his intended wife, the only being he has ever had to love and the only being he thought loved him—I don't think I can omit a word of it. The gay Count Almaviva has married Rosina, and tired of her in the usual aristocratic way. I came across a story the other day to this effect: A servant was complaining of some one who would insist on shooting over his master's land. The servant said he was a gentleman. "How do you know that?" "Because, sir, he keeps twenty horses and another man's wife."

This is Figaro's soliloquy:

"O woman! woman! Creature feeble and deceitful! No animal can be untrue to its instinct: is it thine to deceive? No, my noble master, you shall not succeed; I will prevent it. Because you are a great lord you think yourself a great genius! Nobility, fortune, places, all that creates so much pride. What have you done to deserve so much? You gave yourself the trouble of being born, nothing more. Beyond that a very ordinary man; while as to myself, good heavens! Lost in the obscure crowd, it has been necessary to display more science and calculations to subsist only, than your class has shown to govern Spain and its colonies, and you would play Some one comes it is she

it is no one. The night is as black as the devil, and here am I playing the foolish part of husband, though I am only half married! Could anything be more extraordinary than my destiny? Son of I know not who, stolen by robbers, educated by them in all that was bad, I became disgusted and would try an honest career. I was repulsed everywhere! I learnt chemistry, surgery, and all the credit of a great lord could hardly put into my hand a veterinary lancet! Tired of adding to the suffering of sick beasts, and to do something quite different, I rushed to the theatre and composed a comedy in which I described the life of a seraglio. Being a Spanish author, I thought I could snap my fingers at Mahomet without fear. Immediately an envoy from I know not where complained that I offended in my verses the Sublime Porte, Persia, the whole of Egypt, the realms of Barca, of Tripoli, of Tunis, of Algeria, and of Morocco; and behold my comedy damned, to please Mahometan princes, of whom not one, I believe, knew how to read, and who politely call us dogs of Christians. Not being able to debase genius, fools revenge themselves by ill-treating it. My cheeks became hollow, my means were exhausted. A question then arising on the nature of riches, and as it is not necessary to possess things in order to reason on them, not possessing a farthing I wrote on the value and use of money. Very soon I saw from a hackney-coach the drawbridge of a strong prison lowered for me, on entering which I left outside hope and liberty.

"How I should like to hold one of these powerful titled mushrooms, so light-hearted about the evil they command, after some signal disgrace has cut down his pride:—I would say to him that printed impertinences have no importance except in places where people stop their course; that, without the liberty of blaming there can be no praise; and that only little men fear little writings.

"Tired of nourishing an obscure prisoner, they dropped me one day in the street; and as it is necessary to dine, though one be no more in prison, I cut my pen, and asking every one I met what was the most burning question of the day, they told me that during my economical retreat there had been established in Madrid a system of free trade in all productions, that it extended even to those of the press; and that, provided I did not speak in my writings of the Government, nor of religion, nor of political matters, nor of questions of morality, nor of people in place, nor of any powerful corporation, nor of the opera, nor of any other spectacles, nor of anybody who was anything, I could print all I liked freely, under the inspection of two or three censors. In order to profit by this delightful liberty, I announced a newspaper, and believing that I was not imitating any other name I called it *The Useless Journal*. But in a moment I see raised against me a thousand poor penny-a-liners. I am suppressed, and

behold me again without employment! Despair is about to seize me. They thought they had a place for me, but by misfortune I was just the right man for it: a good arithmetician was required, therefore the post was given to a dancer. Nothing was left for me to do than to steal. I made myself the head of a gambling-house; then I supped in town, and the most polite people opened their houses to me, retaining for themselves three-fourths of the profits. I commenced to recoup; I began even to understand that, for getting on in the world, knowledge of the world was better than knowledge of anything else. But as every one stole around me, in exacting that I alone should be honest I nearly starved again. I quitted the world, and twenty feet of water were about to divide us for ever, when some beneficent God recalled me to my first trade. I returned to my lather and strop; then leaving the smoke of fame for the fools who are nourished by it, and false shame in the middle of the road, as too heavy for a tramp, I went on shaving from town to town, and at last lived without care. A great lord staying at Seville recognized me; I arranged his marriage, and for the price of having gained by my cares his wife, he would now intercept mine! I have just escaped falling into an abyss. I was about to marry my own mother, when the secret of my birth is discovered, and I find both my parents at once. They dispute. It is you, it is he, it is she, it is thee; no, it is not I; who are we all then? O maddening confusion! Why do such things happen to me? Why these things, and not others? Who has fixed them on my head? Forced to pursue a path on which I entered without knowing, as I shall leave it without wishing, I have scattered as many flowers as my gaiety would allow me; yet I say my gaiety without knowing if it is mine more than the rest, nor even what is that me about which I occupy myself; an unformed assemblage of unknown parts; then a wretched imbecile life; a gay little animal; a young man ardent for pleasure, having all the tastes for enjoyment, adopting all conditions in order to live; master here, valet there, just as it pleases fortune; ambitious through vanity, laborious by necessity, but idle . . . with delight! Orator, if necessary; poet, for amusement; musician occasionally; amorous by temperament, I have seen all, done all, and am tired of all. All illusions are now destroyed, and thoroughly disabused . . . disabused! . . . Susan, Susan, Susan! what torments you give me! . . . I hear steps . . . They come. The crisis has arrived."

Can one imagine anything more true and scathing than this soliloquy? But of all the instances of crass folly on record, I think that of the gilded butterflies who laughed and fought for places for one hundred nights to listen to what held them up to ridicule and contempt is really the most stupendous.

Beaumarchais was the pioneer of destruction of the old order

of things in France. He did not use a pike or a torch; he used what was infinitely more dangerous, the brightest and wittiest pen; a pen that shot sparks into barrels of gunpowder which were all nicely arranged for him. If there is anything that is more dangerous and deadly to unjust privileges than another, it is genius. As Dr. Johnson once said, "Dukes and peers don't like men of genius, because they don't like their mouths shut, sir." The same thought must have struck you at meetings. Some great man—I mean great through money and title—will rise to address the audience, which will, after a few seconds, begin to droop on all sides. After some time the gentleman will subside, on which the audience will give a sigh of relief, as if a dentist had finished tugging at a tooth; then some poor devil of a genius will get on his legs, and after a few words, uttered with a beautiful rhythmic ring, the audience will become magnetic, and will cheer, laugh, and have what our American friends call a good time. But our exalted friends suffer so from *ennui*, that feeling as they do such contempt for writing-fellows, they laugh at the sharp epigrammatic sayings—I mean at those they are able to understand, which are usually the poorest and weakest—of the poor genius and don't realize that he is throwing stones at their glass houses; in fact, they very likely have not realized the fact that their houses are glass.

A man of real genius patronised and petted by the aristocracy always reminds me of a tiger cub brought up on the domestic hearthrug and treated like a purring pussy. They think he is a purring pussy. He thinks so too very likely, but he is nothing of the kind; the terrible claws are there and the terrible strength to use them.

We will now turn to a less-known episode in the adventurous life of our shady hero. I refer to the subject of the relations between Beaumarchais' sister and Clavico, of which Goethe made a play.

Beaumarchais had two sisters settled in Madrid. The elder was married, and the younger was engaged to be married to a young man of promise, the keeper of the royal archives.

One day Beaumarchais' father came to him in great distress and agitation, with a letter from his elder daughter stating that Clavico had basely deserted her sister and disgraced her in the eyes of her friends and acquaintances, and that in consequence of the shock her life was in great danger.

The letter finished with these words: "If my brother has sufficient credit to gain us the support of the French ambassador, his excellency might avert the evil that this perfidious man has done us, both by his conduct and his threats. Everybody in Madrid knows that my sister is blameless."

Now I will let Beaumarchais speak for himself.

"My father came to find me at Versailles, and gave me my sister's letter. 'See, my son,' said he, 'what you can do for these

two unfortunate girls, they are not less your sisters than the others."

His father also showed him other letters from the French ambassador to the elder sister, in which he expressed the greatest esteem and consideration for them both.

"I read all the letters," says Beaumarchais; "they reassured me as to the conduct of my sister, and the words of my father, 'they are not less your sisters than the others,' penetrated to the bottom of my heart. 'Take courage,' I said to my father, 'I will take a course which may surprise you, but which appears to me to be the most certain and the wisest.'"

In short, Beaumarchais, with characteristic impetuosity, packed his portmanteau, got a few letters and a great deal of cash and started like a rocket to Madrid.

He arrives, sees his sister, assures himself that her conduct has been perfect, that she has been the victim of an ambitious schemer, takes a friend with him, and meets Clavico at an assembly. He introduces himself as a stranger who had heard of his literary reputation, and is invited by Clavico to take chocolate with him the next morning at nine o'clock.

Beaumarchais goes with his friend the next morning. The rest shall be told in the sparkling, vivid words of Beaumarchais.

"The next morning, at half-past eight, I was with him. I found him in a splendid mansion, which he told me belonged to a friend in the ministry, and that while he was away he used it as his own.

"I am sent, sir," said I, "by a literary society, to establish in all towns through which I pass a literary correspondence with the most learned men in them. As no Spaniard writes better than the author of the articles in *The Thinker*, to whom I have the honour of speaking, whose literary merit is so great that the king has confided to him the care of the royal archives, I did not think that I could better serve my friends than in connecting them with a gentleman of your merit."

"I saw that he was delighted and flattered by my proposition. He talked freely on the subject of literature. He caressed me with his eye; his tone became affectionate; he talked like an angel, and became radiant with pride and pleasure.

"In the midst of his joy he asked me what my business was in Spain? He would be most happy to be of service. 'I accept with gratitude your flattering offers, and will not have, sir, any secrets from you.'

"Then I presented my friend to him, saying that he was not a stranger to the subject of this conversation.

"I told my story thus: 'A French merchant of limited means had several correspondents in Spain. One of the richest, in passing through Paris nine or ten years ago, made him this proposition—"Give me two of your five daughters; I will take them with me to Madrid; they shall live with me, a solitary old bachelor,

make the happiness of my last years, and shall succeed to my fortune."

"The eldest, who was already married, and one of her sisters were confided to his care. Two years after this gentleman died and left them nothing, except the embarrassment of keeping up the business. In spite of difficulties, by the assistance of kind friends, they succeeded.

"At this time a young man presented himself at their house. Notwithstanding his poverty, the ladies, seeing his great eagerness for study, assisted him as much as possible.

"Full of ambition, he formed the project of publishing in Madrid a periodical resembling the English *Spectator*. He received from his friends encouragement and help of every kind. This paper was a great success. Then, animated by the hope of making himself a career, he proposed to marry the young French lady.

"The elder sister told him that he must first succeed; and when some employment, court favour, or some other means of subsistence had given him the right to think of her sister, if she preferred him to other admirers she would give her assent.' (Clavico at this moved uneasily in his seat; and I, without appearing to notice him, continued.)

"The young lady, touched by the merits of the man who pursued her, refused several advantageous offers, and preferring to wait until he who had loved her for four years had made the success his friends dared to hope for him, encouraged him to give to his paper the imposing title of *The Thinker*.' (Here my man almost dropped off his seat.)

"The paper,' I continued with an icy coolness, 'had a prodigious success. The king himself, amused by its ability, gave the author public testimony of his benevolence. He was promised the first available place. Then he drove away all other admirers by his constant and public attentions. The marriage was only delayed by the expectation of a post promised to the author. At last the appointment arrived, after six years' delay, and the lover fled. (Here my man heaved an involuntary sigh, and when conscious of it, blushed with confusion. I took notice of all without stopping.)

"The affair had made too much noise for people to see the end with indifference. The sisters had taken a house large enough for two families; the banns were published. This outrage enraged the common friends of each, who employed themselves eagerly to revenge the insult. The French ambassador took part in the matter; but when this man learnt that the lady had such strong support, fearing a power which might overturn in a moment his rising fortune, he came and cast himself at the feet of his irritated mistress. In his turn he employed all his friends to appease her, and as the anger of a betrayed woman is usually disguised love, all was arranged; the preparations for the marriage were recommenced, the banns re-published, and they were to be

married in three days. The reconciliation had created as much excitement as the rupture. He had to demand the consent of his chief. Before starting, he said: "My friends, preserve me the heart of my mistress until I return from *Situ-real*, and arrange all things so that immediately on my return we can go to the altar together."

"At this point I deepened my voice, and fixing him with my eye, continued:

"He returned the day after next; but instead of leading his victim to the altar, he told the unfortunate girl that he had changed his intention a second time, and would not marry her. Her indignant friends rushed to him immediately. The insolent man threw away all regard to decency, and defied them to injure him, telling them that if the French ladies tried to punish him, they must be careful that he did not ruin them in a country where they were without support.

"At this news the poor girl fell into convulsions, which made her friends fear for her life. At the height of their desolation the elder sister wrote to her family a description of the public outrage they had sustained. This account moved the heart of her brother to such a degree that he determined to come to clear up this entangled affair, and he made but one bound from Paris to Madrid. I am that brother! I have quitted country, duty, family, business, pleasures, to come to avenge in Spain an innocent and unhappy sister. I am here, armed with right and firmness, to unmask a traitor, to write in letters of blood his soul on his face; that traitor is yourself!"

"Try to form a picture of this astonished man, stupefied by my harangue, his mouth open by surprise, which appeared to have frozen his power of speech; the same face which a short time ago was radiant with pleasure, darkening by degrees, the eyes losing their brightness, every feature lengthening and assuming a leaden hue. He tried to stammer some excuses. 'Do not interrupt me, sir; you have nothing to say to me and much to listen to. To commence, have the goodness to declare before this gentleman, who has come expressly with me from France, if by any want of faith, lightness, weakness, bad-temper, or any other vice whatever, my sister has deserved the double outrage that you have had the cruelty of publicly inflicting on her.' 'No, sir; I acknowledge *Dona Maria*, your sister, to be a lady full of talent, graces, and virtue.' 'Has she given you any subject of complaint since you have known her?' 'Never, never.' 'Why then, monster,' said I, rising, 'had you the barbarity to treat her as you have done, only because her heart preferred you to ten other better men?' 'Ah! sir, there have been instigations, counsels; if you only knew. . . .' 'That is enough.'

"Then turning towards my friend: 'You have heard the justification of my sister, go and publish it. What I have now to say

to this gentleman does not require a witness.' My friend went. Clavico, more than astonished, rose in his turn. I made him sit. 'Now, sir, that we are alone, this is my project, and I hope you will approve it.

"It will suit your arrangements and mine that you should not marry my sister; and you feel that I do not come here to play the absurd part of a brother in a play who insists on marrying his sister; but you have outraged most impudently a lady of honour, because you believed she was without support in a foreign country; that proceeding is characteristic of a vulgar and cowardly man. You must therefore commence by admitting, in your own handwriting, of your own free will, all your doors open and your servants in the room, who will not understand you, because we will speak French, that you are an abominable man who has deceived, betrayed, outraged my sister without any cause; and your declaration in my hands, I shall go to my ambassador at Aranjuez, I will show him your writing, I will then have it printed at once. After to-morrow the town and the Court shall be inundated with it. I have powerful friends here, time, and money; all shall be employed to ruin you, to pursue you in every way without pause, until the resentment of my sister is appeased and she commands me to cease.'

"I will not make such a declaration," said Clavico in an altered voice. 'I believe it, because, perhaps, in your place I would not do it myself. But this is the only alternative, write or do not write: from this moment I remain with you; I leave you no more; wherever you go I will follow you, until, impatient of my company, you deliver yourself to me behind Buenretiro. If I am more fortunate than you, sir, without seeing my ambassador, without speaking to any one here, I will take my dying sister in my arms, place her in my carriage, and return to France with her. If, on the contrary, fortune favours you, all is finished for me. I will make my will before meeting you. You will have every advantage over us; you may even laugh at our expense. Order them to bring you breakfast.'

We need hardly say that before such wit, courage, and resources, Clavico threw up his arms. He begged Beaumarchais on his knees not to ruin him. His surrender to the brother was as cowardly as the outrage inflicted on the sister. Beaumarchais at last felt pity for the poor wretch, and eventually gave him hope of pardon. He knew very well that his poor sister really loved the good-looking, clever scoundrel. The reconciliation was celebrated, the banns were re-published, when the miserable wretch took flight again. Beaumarchais was warned by a friendly officer to leave Spain at once. "You have not a moment to lose. Go at once, or to-morrow morning you will be arrested in your bed. The order is given; I have come to warn you. Clavico is a monster; he has prejudiced every one against you. Fly, fly at once, or,

confined in a dungeon, you will have neither protection nor defence."

Beaumarchais' reply was:

"I fly! I save myself! I will perish rather. Do not try to persuade me, my friends; provide a carriage for me with six mules by four o'clock to-morrow morning, and I will go to Aranjuez."

"I then shut myself up. I was nearly mad; my heart was in a vice; nothing could calm my agitation. I threw myself into a chair, where I remained two hours, incapable of forming an idea or a resolution."

In a state of positive intoxication he performed the twelve hours' journey to Aranjuez. He rushed into the presence of the French ambassador, who told him that Clavico and his powerful friends had acted with such consummate art that he could do nothing for him except retard his arrest for a few hours. Beaumarchais left the ambassador more desperate than ever. He then rushed to a personal friend of the king's, who listened to his story with interest and sympathy. This gentleman introduced Beaumarchais to the cabinet of the king, to whom he read the history of the whole affair. The king instantly ordered the disgrace and dismissal of Clavico from all his posts. Then the wretched Clavico wrote to Beaumarchais for pity and assistance. And our fiery, good-hearted friend was fool enough to plead for the villain; but, thanks to the better sense of those who knew the facts of the case, he pleaded in vain.

Why are we all so in love with men like Beaumarchais?

I think because of the interest they take in humanity. Careful, prudent, painstaking, exemplary persons may be very laudable, very respectable; but although they may gain our approval, they never gain our love. While our erratic, sparkling, loving, quarrelling, disreputable Beaumarchais, Fielding, Mirabeau, Sheridan, Molière, Burns, live in our hearts, and their very names make our eyes sparkle with delight. When it is a question of doing a generous action, they don't stop to count the cost. They are not always thinking of the opinion of Mrs. Grundy. The one thing needful with them is not a big balance at the bankers; they would not see a man they call friend go to ruin for £50 when they could easily spare £500. In short, our dear scapegraces, with all their faults and shortcomings, can love some things and some persons even more than themselves. And we foolish people who love them are not such egregious idiots as some very respectable and cold-blooded people suppose.

TEN TO ONE ON THE "SCREW."

By PHILIP GASKELL,

AUTHOR OF "THE SENIOR MAJOR."

"DO you think he means to put us up? I'll go, I think, if he does, for I'm too hard up just now to stand being a week at an inn on my own hook."

The speaker is a young officer in the uniform of the Chalkshire Rifles. He has rather a rapid expression of countenance, but might, save for the visible effects of too early dissipation, be described as good-looking. His name is Grimshaw, and his remark calls forth a roar of laughter from two brother-officers who happen to be present. In the barrack-room appertaining to the oldest of the party, the three young fellows are, on one hot July night, "killing the enemy," to wit, the mighty "reaper" who by this playful pseudonym is by these frolicsome spirits familiarly spoken of.

"Put us up!" repeats Jemmy Fancourt with a broad grin on his cheery face; "I like that. Fancy your having been three months in the Chalkshires without having found out that Bill de Beevor was never known to give anything for nothing. He takes deuced good care, as any one can see by his letter, that there shall be no misunderstanding in the matter of putting up. Cracks up the 'Saumon Inn' no end, as having first-rate grub, and that kind of thing. Now, I really wonder," continued Fancourt thoughtfully, "what put it into old Bill's head to write to you fellows about these Morlaix races?"

"Thinks it would be a jolly lark between returns," suggested Tom Grimshaw, as he blew towards the ceiling a light smoke from his cigar.

"Has an idea, perhaps, that we shall like to see the country," surmised an evidently "home-keeping" youth, whose "homely wits" rendered him the victim of many a good-humoured shower of chaff.

"Wishes to improve your mind, eh, Talmash? Zeal for the service," laughed Fancourt. "I'll just tell you boys now what it is, and then you can't say afterwards that you haven't been forewarned. De Beevor is just the most knowing card in England, and if he doesn't run you in for something considerable I'm a Dutchman. He is, as we all know, about the best gentleman rider going——"

"Oh! I'm not afraid of being done," put in, with the proverbial rashness of youth, Second Lieutenant Tom Grimshaw. At which boast there was another burst of hilarity, it being in the regiment an universally accepted fact that if there existed a chap who was safe to be taken in, that chap was Thomas Grimshaw.

Lord de Beevor, for such was the real style and title of the ex-rifleman on whom had been bestowed by irreverent youngsters the sobriquet of Bill, was the grandson of a very high and puissant marquis indeed; but pending the said Bill's elevation to rank and honours, he was, it must be owned, rather a low little personage, his only claims to distinction being based upon his skill as a steeplechase rider, and his excellence as a rifle shot. As a consequence of these merits, and also, it is to be feared, owing to a certain British weakness for a "lord," from which some of the Chalkshire Rifles were not wholly exempt, many of the men who had known him in the corps were rather proud of the fact that he had belonged to it. A serious quarrel with Lord de Beevor and his grandfather, whose son and heir had died suddenly a year before, had resulted in the migration, *pro tem.*, of the younger man to the then cheap, and not greatly visited by tourists, locality of Lower Brittany. There, in an old Carlist château, partly occupied by an ex-English lawyer of indifferent repute, and his good-looking, underbred wife, the young scion of aristocracy, who was not, to borrow a French term, "very well viewed" by the aborigines of the country, roughed it on ten pounds a week, paid every Saturday to his order. On that sum, however, he contrived to keep a couple of nags and a small but useful pack of hounds, for in those days there was no lack of wild boar in the woods; and it was with the prospect of a boar-hunt, added to the excitement of a steeplechase, that Bill de Beevor had contrived to lure to the French Peninsula the two young fellows of whom, by the aliases of Grimshaw and Talmash, I have already written.

It was a long journey to Quimperlé, the town whither they were bound, and more than once as they jogged slowly along the Landes country, the travellers, on whom the picturesque aspects of the route were clearly thrown away, reproached themselves in no measured terms for the folly of which they had been guilty. It was late in the evening when, tired and hungry, they reached the "Hôtel du Saumon," an unassuming little hostelry standing on the shore of the Quimperlé river—a stream which, owing to the neglect by the adjacent landlords of their piscatorial rights, affords but little sport to lovers of the "gentle art." Over both the feelings and the language, given vent to by the aggrieved Englishmen when the best food which the inn could produce was set before them, it behoves us not to dwell. They were neither of them quite new to foreign parts, and to the every-day treatment which a well-to-do traveller in a Paris hotel is safe to meet

with; but if they had seen visions and dreamt dreams of such prefatory luxuries as a dainty *pistolet*, snow-white in its interior, and of thin pats of delicate butter reposing in a rampart of ice, they were doomed to signal disappointment. The loaf, three feet long at the very least, was flung upon the long, but for the nonce empty *table d'hôte*, by a red-faced Breton peasant-girl, underneath whose sonsy arm it had been reposing, and it certainly needed the sauce of hunger to induce the visitors to partake either of its half-sour and wholly whitey-brown component parts, or of the *bifteck aux pommes de terre* which was eventually set before them. The *vin du pays* was pronounced execrable, nor was the cider, on which the Breton peasant rarely misses an opportunity of *endimanchéing* himself, declared to be better tippie. Happily, however, the sufferers having youth and good health on their side contrived not only to live through these inflictions, but to be tolerably "fit" for the boar-hunt, at which (to them) novel species of sport they fully expected to distinguish themselves. Immediately therefore, after an early breakfast, they started with their respective munitions of war in a country *carriole* drawn by a sturdy Pontalec stallion for Château Keratry.

On the road—a distance of some five miles—to that retired residence they took note, much to their amusement, of numerous passing horsemen, on their way, like themselves, to "*la chasse*." The costumes of these "noble gentlemen sportsmen" were freely commented on by the Englishmen, not only *en route*, but on arriving at the château.

"By Jove! did you ever see such guys?" exclaimed Talmash. "Look at that fellow in the pea-green coat and hunting horn!"

"And that chap coming on, with his wooden buttons as big as dollars, and some kind of beast or bird on every one of them! Such seats, too, as they have! I wonder we haven't seen a cropper yet, but we shall, I bet, before the day's done."

Their reception by the self-exiled little English lord was very cordial as to words, and as he introduced them to a few of the French sportsmen, he contrived to whisper in the Englishmen's ears that they, the curiously got-up riders, were not fellows to be despised.

"They are counts and marquises, every man jack of them," he said; "old Carlist families. Blue blood, don't you know? The mayor of the commune wouldn't have allowed of this boar-battue but for them. The peasants are always getting up a concurrence to shoot down the boars on the plea that they are ravaging the crops, but it's the *noblesse* really who set it going."

After this explanation, the entire party, amounting to about forty gentlemen, made their way to the woods, whence from that moment there proceeded a mighty sound of shouting, and of the fanfares of *cors de chasse*. For hours at a stretch were they at it, hoping at every moment to hear from amongst the brushwood

covert the rush of their expected prey, but, *ay, di mi!* the brute, of whom Shakespeare wrote that

"On his bow-back he hath a battle-set
Of bristly pikes that ever threat his foes,"

did not on that occasion condescend to put in an appearance, the only victim to the sportsmen's "bows and spears" being a harmless squirrel which Tom Grimshaw, with the purpose of unloading his gun, took aim at, and incontinently, as a trophy of the day's sport, bagged. On the following morning our riflemen, accompanied by their quondam brother-officer, set off—"a day's journey through the wilderness"—to Quimperlé. Their talk on the way ran chiefly on equine subjects, and on their arrival, the first object of interest, to Lord de Beevor especially, was the Lady Alicia, a weedy thoroughbred mare, bred by its owner, and which was safe to win the 1,000 francs prize at the forthcoming Quimperlé steeplechase.

The great day—great, that is to say, for the poor Armoricain, in whose eyes the sum of forty pounds is a synonym for wealth—dawned bright and clear. The time fixed for the all-important event was 2 p.m., and previous to that hour the young English officers were enabled to form an opinion, not alone of the nags which had entered for the race, but of the jockeys by whom they were to be ridden. The former, five in number, were heavy, country-bred stallions, whilst their riders were stalwart Breton peasants clad in the costume of the department, to wit, an embroidered velveteen jacket and loose *bragues, id est*, puffed out breeches. Their long hair fell over their shoulders; on their heads were broad-brimmed felt hats, whilst their feet were shod with sabots, *anglicé*, wooden shoes. The contrast between these stolid countrymen and Lord de Beevor, as the latter, faultlessly got up in his racing colours—green and purple—stood with his friends near the weighing-stand, was so strongly marked that Fred Talmash was seized with an involuntary impulse to say:

"Well, by Jove! this is rot, and no mistake. What a farce this weighing is, and what chance have these poor devils against your English thoroughbred?"

"None whatever," was "Bill's" cool reply; "but they, as well as their backers, hold a different opinion. Obstinacy and conceit are such marked features in the Breton character that half these fellows with handles to their names are convinced that their breed of horses is the best in the world. The course is a long one, and they are ready to lay long odds against Lady Alicia's staying powers. They are arrant fools about horseflesh, and you can run them in for a good pile of naps, if you take my advice."

"Thank you," rejoined Fred drily, "but it doesn't exactly suit my book to bet on a certainty."

A shrug of the shoulders was Lord de Beevor's only answer

to this remark, and then, time being up, the bell for saddling was rung, and all was excitement and hurry. It is needless to describe a race the result of which could not, in the opinion of a single sensible looker-on, have been for a moment doubtful. After it was over and whilst the successful winner of the 1,000 francs prize was standing in his bravery of shining satin by the side of the open carriage from which his two compatriots had witnessed the race, an event worthy of notice occurred. The English consul, a liberal, kindly specimen of his countrymen, feeling, as did many of those who had been spectators of the race, for the discomfited aborigines, resolved on getting up by subscription a small sum to be run for as a "consolation stake" by the peasantry alone. Amongst the first of those to whom he held out the hat was the successful rider of Lady Alicia. From his comparative abundance, the good-natured consul doubtless expected substantial aid; his disgust and annoyance may therefore be better imagined than described when his noble countryman flatly refused to contribute a farthing to the fund!

"What an infernal cad!" whispered Grimshaw to his companion when "Bill" had sauntered for the moment out of hearing, and forthwith the two young soldiers did for the honour of their country and their corps contrive, not particularly flush of cash though they were, to "fork out" each man his napoleon as a quota to the "consolation stakes." "Upon my soul, if I had had a notion of his being such a thundering screw I'd have seen him at the devil before I'd have come within a hundred miles of his confounded *shatoe*."

"We had better have taken old Fancourt's advice and stopped in barracks," said Talinash. "Little cad! What must the people of the country think of an English lord after this! I vote we cut away home again, for I, for one, have had pretty nearly enough of the Saumon cookery, and the grub here isn't much better."

Against this proposal Tom Grimshaw had nothing to urge, so that after taking a somewhat chilling farewell of the ex-rifleman, the two young fellows, whose sense of honour was as yet keen and unsullied, made tracks for England.

Very shortly after this event, the Marquis of McCultramore, after an innings of nearly ninety years, joined the majority, and Bill de Beevor reigned in his stead. The new peer was, as regarded the fashionable London world, what may be called a "dark horse." He had never gone in, as the saying is, for ladies' society, and being, as I have already said, the reverse of good to look at, it so chanced that when some eight months after his grandfather's death he found himself for the first time domiciled for awhile in London, he had never been at a ball in his life. But things were altered now. A young bachelor-marquis possessed of a rental of £80,000 per annum and two of the finest "places" in England is of

necessity a marked man. "*Noblesse oblige*," and therefore it came about that one of the new marquis' noble cousins induced with some difficulty the shy little man to assist, at the said cousin's invitation alone, at a ball given by Almeria, Countess of Hauteville. Now this same dowager countess being one of the most insolent and overbearing of London fine ladies, Lord John Rivers should have been better advised than to give his cousin the *entrée* of her ladyship's mansion without previously preparing her for the extremely unattractive appearance of her unexpected guest. The consequences of this omission soon became apparent. Lady Hauteville's eagle eye having fixed its gaze on a young man of plebeian appearance, whose plain features were not rendered more attractive by the spectacles which shortness of sight compelled him to wear, lost not a moment in bringing the intruder, as she at once decided him to be, to book.

"Pray," she asked, with a hauteur of voice and manner which was intended to strike dumb with consternation the "vulgar little fellow" she was condescending to address, "have you received an invitation from me to this ball?"

Now the quondam Bill de Beevor was not only no fool, but he had very lofty ideas concerning his own exalted position. The comic side of the situation was, moreover, not lost upon him, and he therefore abstained at that moment from making known his style and quality, contenting himself with the mere confession that he was an uninvited guest.

Upon hearing this cool admission of his guilt, the wrath of the irate dowager knew no bounds.

"Insolent fellow!" she exclaimed. "Leave my house this moment or I shall send for the police to expel you from the rooms!"

"No occasion, ma'am, I'm off," said the "fellow," who, after making his best bow, and bad, it must be owned, was that best, obeyed, with much laughter in his sleeve, the great lady's behest.

I am sadly afraid that the countess, when she, soon after the marquis's expulsion, discovered her mistake, gave the lie for the moment to the motto that *bon sang ne ment pas*, and indulged in language unbecoming a peeress and a gentlewoman. There was something, seeing that she possessed three plain daughters on the look out for eligible husbands, to be said in her ladyship's excuse, and also for the tone of abject humility in which her after apologies to Lord McCultramore were couched. She even entreated him to forget the past, and favour her with his company on the following day to dinner, which invitation was, however, promptly but civilly declined.

There was, however, consolation in store for the *grande dame*, whose zeal had so unfortunately outrun her discretion; for on the week following that of her deeply-regretted act, a paragraph in the *Morning Post* announced the fact that the "Most Noble the

Marquis of McCultramore had that morning led to the hymeneal altar, Jemima, fourth daughter of Josiah Wilkinson, Esquire, of Dale View House, Clapham."

"A young man of low tastes, evidently, as well as atrociously vulgar-looking," commented the dowager, when it afterwards transpired that "Bill" had been during four years faithful to his Jemima; his determination to "stick" to that young lady having caused the breach between himself and his grandfather which only death had healed.

So that there was some good in the little lord after all!

"Were man
But constant, he would be perfect,"

wrote Shakespeare; but whether Lord McCultramore's constancy to the fair Jemima resulted from the memory of her charms, or from the early military training which he had received, matters little; it is sufficient to know that although on the Morlaix race-course he had shown himself to be a "cad," he did not forget, when performing the most important act of a lifetime, to act up to the too-often-neglected motto that

NOBLESSE OBLIGE.

ON BOARD R. Y. S. "SANTA MARIA."

THE START FOR THE JUBILEE YACHT RACE.

JUNE 14TH, 1887.

THE development of yachting has been as vigorous as other things in this happy Victorian reign, and what more natural than to have some important "sea mark"—for we cannot call it a land mark—to celebrate the occasion of fifty years' prosperous and happy reign. The course was to be round the United Kingdom, for a Jubilee Cup, value one thousand guineas; the start from off Southend pier at the hour of noon, Tuesday, June 14th. Various advertisements invited enthusiasts to take passage in the "Norham Castle" (Donald Currie Cape Liner), in the "Athenian," and the General Steam Navigation Company's "Eagle." Of these we thought seriously, when a kindly note arrived with an invitation to luncheon on board R.Y.S. "Santa Maria"—special train from Charing Cross to Port Victoria, then on board and steam out to see the start. How one enjoys breakfast on such a morning—and such a bright morning—everything ready before sitting down to the matutinal comforter—race-glasses ready, cigar case, matches, and invitation note as a pass. A special train imparts always a kind of festive atmosphere to a station, even to Charing Cross. It was not a time of waterproofs and sou'-westers, but sunshades, yacht badges, and dust-coats even. Starting to the minute we soon flew down to Greenhithe, with the "Chichester" and "Arethusa" training ships peacefully carrying on their good work. Then in the distance we saw Purfleet, with the "Goliath" training ship and the Siamese hospital ships. By this time Father Thames had assumed an air of gaiety, bunting was abundant, and the steamers were hurrying down. As a matter of course, although everything augured well, there was something which might improve the occasion—that was an all-important item. "There might be a little more wind," would not be a grumbling remark, for a summer morning haze surrounded us, the steamer's smoke went straight up and lay in strata, yacht sails reflected, and the very cattle in the marshes were in repose. Port Victoria was duly reached; the kind owner and owneress, Mr. and Mrs. Rolls, of the Hendre, welcomed us on board the "Santa Maria," R.Y.S. We soon cast off and steamed for the starting point—still oil calm. The "Pandora," Mr. W. H. Smith's yacht, laid ahead of us, and a racer was towed by. Sheerness looked business-like; Queenborough, with its Elizabethan tradition of the Mayor's tattered hose and Flushing steamer of the present day, was grey and in shadow, when a salute boomed from the flag-ship, H.M.S. "Duncan," and we knew the Prince of Wales had arrived. There is always something grand about the smoke curling over the water. Then another flash, and more smoke—it takes one back

to the fighting walls of Old England, and the fighting "Temeraire," and James' "Naval History." There was not much time to spare, having to steam down to the Nore light-ship to get round the Spit, which runs so far out. Across it we could make out the racers preparing for a flying start, with about ninety yachts and screw steamers, the huge grey "Norham Castle," the "Athenian," and many more vessels. Every class of boat was there, from the shrimping bawleys to the stately "Czarina," of which the owner, Mr. Albert Brassey, may be justly proud, and the Royal Thames Yacht Club, too, for she was flying the blue ensign in their honour, not of one simple bunting, but of shining silk. So many vessels under weigh at once and so thick, the marvel was there were no collisions—the more credit to the amateurs at the helm, and their name was legion. The starting line was between the "Norham Castle" and the end of Southend pier. One gun only was fired, and they were started by the Commodore of the Royal Thames, H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, and away they went. The Royal party went on board Lord Alfred Paget's steam yacht "Violet," and steamed towards the Mouse. At this time we had an interesting incident on board. The Prince's schooner "Aline" had Lord Suffield on board, and we had on board his sea gear and his valet, this wise. At Charing Cross the valet, finding himself already "at sea," for he could not get down in time, asked if he might be allowed to go down in the special. "Certainly," said the kindly owner, Mr. Rolls, "and put you on board, if possible." To make the story short, after the "Aline" had started in the race the "Santa Maria," knowing nothing else could be done, ran under her lee, very smartly lowered her dingey, and hanging on to the main chains, handed in the gear. Lord Suffield was comforted; he smole a smile and forgave the tardy valet, and held on his course with our best wishes. Soon after the "Sleuthhound," 40-tonner, on port tack, crossed the bow of the "Aline" on the starboard; she went about, and soon two hands were seen flying the Protest blue ensign reversed in the lee fore-rigging. Amongst the racers was one craft of much individuality. To begin with, she was grey, some of the invisible grey of many torpedo boats. She was a ketch, a ketch being a yawl with the mizenmast farther forward and carrying a mizen gaff-topsail when requisite; she looked very workmanlike, in fact so much as to recall associations of the Dogger Bank. By this time we were bound for the Mouse light, and passed a number of vessels. One green, with the letters "wreck," three lower mast heads, just out of the water, and small craft round, showed the catastrophe that had occurred, and showed us that even at the Nore it is not all plain sailing, and that the dangers of the sea may overtake us any time. One of the great charms of a day like this is the revival of old associations. For this the Royal Thames Yacht Club offers great

scope. The elders relate old yarns of early days, which the younger ones hand down to those who come after. The merits of the yachts are gradually discussed until we get so far back as the yacht matches in the Thames, when the "Lady Louisa" and other 12-tonners started from Greenwich, and the sight of the "Violet," Lord Alfred Paget's, a name especially associated with the "Mystery," 25 tons, and the "Secret," "Blue Belle," "Volante," and the "Belvedere," and an 18-tonner, built and steered by "Charlie Stokes." In those days Lord Alfred's father, the Marquis of Anglesey, used to come in his grand craft "The Pearl," 120-ton cutter, and run alongside the club steamer and take off his glazed hat as we cheered him again and again. The history of the "Pearl" is curious and interesting. The Marquis of Anglesey prided himself in having the fleetest of the fleet, but one day in a hard breeze in the mouth of the Thames a smart and small craft passed him. For months he inquired and tried to discover the mysterious stranger, but of no avail. At last, one day, the long-wished-for answer came. "Who was it? why it must be old Santy, the smuggler, out of Colne River." The Marquis went up the Colne River and found old Santy in prison for smuggling. The next thing was to get him out, but Santy could neither read nor write, and he could not get any one to trust him for timber. That difficulty was soon overcome, and he built the "Pearl." In the Castle of the Royal Yacht Squadron, West Cowes, the "Pearl" may be seen in company with the "Falcon" and other celebrities in the club picture, and well she looks. Other vessels were built; the Wyvenhoe men took up yachting vigorously and well, and in the present day the old yacht is known in Wyvenhoe as "The Mother," and affectionately her children speak of her.

What a change in yachting now! Instead of two or three fellow-salts, a party of ninety or more, youth, beauty, and intellect of various growths, going where they list, and punctually returning to catch a special back to dine in town. For this we are indebted to the ladies, and the sweet persuasive influence of the wives of owners, who, when they take friends out, can now tell pretty nearly when they can bring them back. What a contrast to a ladies' party, becalmed mid-channel for forty-eight hours even, with a bachelor owner.

On our return to Port Victoria we found H.M.S. "Mohawk," new steel torpedo cruiser, had arrived, bristling with torpedo shoots, and guns as well, and as she lay by the noble old "Duncan" flag, we could but think what splinters she would blow her into if her destructive power were put forth.

We were all sorry as our delightful visit closed; we hoped the "best yacht" would win in the long course of the Jubilee Race, and that our host and hostess would enjoy for many years the delights and comfort of the "Santa Maria."

THE DUKE OF MELTON:

A STORY IN TWO PARTS.

By LADY VIRGINIA SANDARS,

AUTHOR OF "THE HEIRESS OF HAREDALE," ETC.

PART II.

WHEN Oliver entered the remarkably comfortable room prepared for his reception, he flung himself into the nearest chair with a groan, exclaiming, "I'm a lost man; they are ten times more beautiful than I anticipated, and as to that Hyacinth, she is simply adorable."

Then, having a due appreciation of his own external advantages, he proceeded with considerable male coquetry to begin his toilet. Long ere it was completed Selmar entered the room, and glancing round, observed dryly:

"I see you have the state apartment. In mine there is hardly a whole piece of furniture. And as to the bed, so rickety is its appearance I have serious doubts of my night's repose."

"Ah! ah! you begin to find there are some advantages in dukedom. So do I now," nonchalantly replied Oliver as he carefully tied his neat white cravat.

"What a fop you are!" good-humouredly replied Selmar. "But I tell you one thing upon which I am determined, to dismiss this valet you engaged. After ringing for him in vain, a housemaid appeared, saying, 'The duke's gentleman was at his tea and could not be disturbed.' And when the impertinent rascal did at last obey my summons, he coolly informed me he was not engaged to wait upon the duke's friends."

"Capital," cried Oliver with a roaring laugh. "But pardon me, Curling Tongs suits me to perfection. Couldn't think of parting with him."

Giving his long silky moustache a final twirl, he rose from his chair, calling out impudently as he left the room, "Blow out the candles, there's a good fellow, and let us proceed to join the ladies."

"The candles be hanged," testily replied Selmar; "and remember, I expect you to uphold the dignity of the position in which you temporarily stand. No tripping into flirtation, Mr. Oliver, to which you seem already inclined."

"Tripping! why, I have been discretion itself," replied Oliver innocently. "But, indeed," he added with fervour, "these girls are so superhumanly beautiful, they might cause St. Anthony himself to trip."

In the drawing-room the ladies were already assembled.

They had exchanged their tea-gowns for *demi toilettes* of ravishing design. Made by themselves, there is no doubt.

"What admirable poor men's wives they would make," thought Oliver, who had an inkling how pecuniary matters stood at the Dower House. The sisters, in their gay artistic costumes, might fitly be compared to splendid hot-house orchids, while Kate in her simple white gown represented the modest snowdrop. If the duke had been charmed with her before, he was doubly so when, coming timidly forward, she presented him with a late rosebud, saying, "Tiger and I have picked this for you in token of our gratitude."

The truth was, Kate, indignant at finding that a splendid button-hole had been prepared for the duke, while his friend had been neglected, was determined to make amends for such neglect.

This evening, and many that followed, passed most agreeably for all concerned. The invitation for a week was extended to a fortnight, then to three weeks. The gentlemen were only too willing to stay on; and from the difficulty Lady Lodore appeared to find in collecting a suitable establishment for the Abbey, a duty she had volunteered to undertake, it really seemed, as Oliver observed, as though there were no respectable servants left in England.

It must not be supposed that during these halcyon weeks the Misses Parkhurst wholly turned over their former friends, Major Banger and Captain Smithers; they were far too keen-witted and also kind-hearted. And notwithstanding the viscountess's almost tearful remonstrances, insisted on both being asked to meet the duke at dinner, Hyacinth saying decisively, "Depend upon it, mamma, the duke has heard all sorts of ill-natured reports respecting our flirtations with these gentlemen. We will prove their exaggerated falseness."

And most effectually did wily Hyacinth carry out her intentions. Boldly she asked the unfortunate Captain Smithers, who sat next her at dinner, in a loud clear voice, to repeat his softest, tenderest whispers, and having thereby driven that unfortunate officer to the verge of insanity, she put a climax to his misery by presenting her former admirer, as he was leaving, with the famous crimson stockings, while she said blandly, in the hearing of all present and to the infinite amusement of Oliver:

"I trust, Captain Smithers, they will keep you nice and warm during the winter, serving at the same time to keep the donor in remembrance."

"Heartless flirt!" exclaimed the outraged captain; "I could have thrown the beastly things into that grinning duke's face," he added savagely, as he and the jovial major drove away from the scene of their former triumphs back to barracks.

"Ah, Smithers, my boy, you haven't the ghost of a chance

against a duke, and one so handsome to boot," responded Banger, laughing. "Don't be a dog in the manger. You have said a hundred times you were too poor to marry. Don't stand in the lovely Hyacinth's path to a ducal coronet. By Jove! she looked every inch a duchess to-night," exclaimed the major enthusiastically.

"A coquette—a woman without a heart or soul!" furiously responded Smithers; "never shall she mount a horse of mine again."

When the party finally broke up at the Dower House, all had become as well acquainted as if they had known each other for years, and parted with the full intention of meeting as often as possible, for which the hunting season just commencing gave ample opportunities, as all the Misses Parkhurst were good and fearless riders.

At the departure of their guests, none grieved more than Kate, and in the privacy of her own little room she shed many tears.

All unconscious as was her unsophisticated heart of the fact, she had been for some time completely absorbed in the delirious excitement of a first flirtation, ending with her in a much deeper feeling. Not that the duke had at first the slightest idea of making love to Kate, who, only seventeen, appeared to him almost a child.

But rather piqued at finding himself entirely neglected by the stately beauties, he not unnaturally turned to Kate for companionship, finding in her society such sweet amends for the neglect of others that he wholly failed to keep a Cerberus watch on Oliver's movements, leaving that gentleman to walk and flirt with the Misses Parkhurst to the fullest extent his inflammable heart prompted, while he himself roamed with innocent Kate through the fast autumning woods, instructing her in charmed words with the habits of birds and animals—of which her Indian life had left her unacquainted—or repeating pastoral poetry until he fairly bewitched the young girl's heart from her own keeping into his. In teaching Kate natural history, he had taught her something deeper.

The duke might, however, have remained in complete ignorance, not only of his conquest, but also of the serious impression Kate had made on his own heart, had not both facts been most pleasantly revealed to him on the morning of his departure.

Gazing from his bedroom window and pondering on the vanity of things in general, his eyes were suddenly attracted to Kate, sitting in the garden under a tree, and evidently holding confidential conversation with Tiger, who had his ears cocked at attention, and was looking up at his pretty mistress with deep sagacity.

After watching for a short time this pretty picture, it suddenly struck him that in no way could he spend his time more agreeably until breakfast than by making a third in the little group.

As he came up to where Kate sat, his footfall fell so noiselessly on the grass that she remained unaware of his approach, and he overheard her say plaintively, as he stood a moment behind her:

"Ah, Tiger! if nobody else cares, we are sorry—terribly sorry—our friend is leaving us, though he is not a duke."

"Bow-wow," joyously responded Tiger to this melancholy appeal, while the duke came forward, saying with a smile:

"Good morning, Miss Morden. I am glad you do not value your friends according to the height of the pedestal on which they stand. But may I have the supreme happiness of thinking I am the friend whose departure you and Tiger regret?"

Kate's face was suffused with blushing confusion as the duke sat down beside her. She was very fair to behold—the fairest of all God's beautiful creatures—a lovely innocent girl in the first dawn of womanhood. And so thought the duke as he gazed at her downcast eyes and blushing countenance. As she did not speak, he continued:

"So you don't care about dukes? How wonderful! I thought most young ladies regarded them with admiration and awe."

"There are exceptions to all rules," replied Kate, looking up for the first time. "Besides, the duke paid *me* no attention," she added simply, "while you have been very kind to me."

"Who would not be kind to you?" he replied with a beaming smile. "But would you not like to be a duchess, Miss Morden?"

"I should be afraid," she replied solemnly. "Moreover a duchess should be tall and stately, like—like dear Hyacinth. Don't you think so?" She looked up at him timidly, but with keen, anxious inquiry, wholly unnoticed by the duke, who was far too much engrossed with his own feelings to be concerned about the love-making of others. He was only thinking how enchanting was this girl beside him, with her simple, unsophisticated words and modest manner; and how charming she looked with the changing colour in her cheek and with her abundant brown hair, reflecting golden tints beneath the sun shining on her uncovered head.

"I am so glad you don't care about dukes, Miss Morden," he answered dreamily, "for it holds out a chance that more ordinary mortals may still breathe, even hope, in the presence of girlish youth and beauty. And now," he looked earnestly at Kate's blushing face, "will you repeat again words I know were only meant for Tiger's ears—that you are sorry for my departure?"

For a moment she hesitated, and then answered almost inaudibly, without looking up, "I am indeed very sorry."

"Then if my departure is unmourned by all others, I care not," he exclaimed.

Here a bell, loudly rung at the open window by Daphne, recalled the duke and Kate to the sublunary fact that breakfast was proceeding, and in delicious silence they obeyed its summons.

Happy, happy Kate! Still happier duke, who had found the Eldorado of his wishes!

No sooner were the guests departed than, assembled in Iris's room, the girls began a spirited discussion of their merits.

Too well-bred to have entirely ignored the duke's friend, they had been to him coldly courteous, though, indeed, under ordinary circumstances his attractions were quite sufficient to have offered an inducement for temporary flirtation. But until assured which was the favoured one, none of the three dared endanger their chance of becoming a duchess by any profitless coquetry with the duke's friend, and now wasted but few words on his qualifications, good or bad, all their thoughts and conversation being devoted to the supposed duke's merits and personal attractions. Hyacinth was, however, unusually silent, while Daphne was the principal speaker. Evidently her hopes ran high. But they were unpleasantly crushed by Iris oracularly saying:

"Well, girls, I consider myself quite out of the running—in fact, scratched, and I strongly advise you to withdraw also, Daphne. We must both use all our influence to help darling Hyacinth; for though charming to us all, I observed that when talking to *us*, the duke's eyes were still ever fixed upon *her*. And he said good-bye to her last."

Daphne's countenance fell as she replied, "I really don't think my chance is a bad one. But still you have had so much experience in these matters, Iris, that I am ready to withdraw if you are confident in your judgment. But in this case it is a pity I so consistently snubbed Major Banger, and, indeed, that we all should have paid so little attention to Major Selmar."

"He seemed to console himself very well for our neglect," drily observed Hyacinth.

"He only took up with Kate *faute de mieux*," rather spitefully responded Daphne. "I must congratulate you, Kate, on the very hopeful manner in which you have begun the guerilla warfare of flirtation. But, my dear, I gathered from the duke that his friend hasn't a rap! So beware."

"Oh! how worldly you are, Daphne," cried Kate indignantly, her face crimson with excitement, but far too secure in her newborn happiness to resent her cousin's ill-natured speech. "If ever I do marry," she continued, "I should prefer marrying a poor man, for then the truth of my affection could never be doubted."

"Transcendently romantic rubbish, my dear. When you have manufactured your own wardrobe as long as I have, and packed as many trunks, you will become slightly more prosaic. It is better to be born a dairymaid than in a station you can't adequately uphold," said Daphne, leaving the room in a decidedly crestfallen spirit.

At the Abbey Oliver and the duke sat opposite each other in the smoking-room. Oliver was moody and taciturn, the duke hilarious and talkative.

"Well, Oliver," he observed, "we have had a charming visit, and on the whole I remain satisfied with your conduct, though I am not *quite* sure that your farewell to Miss Hyacinth was not a *little* too tender. The length of time you held her hand at parting might lead to hopes that can have no fruition."

"Hang these footstools, they are in every one's way," petulantly exclaimed Oliver, kicking the offending article from one end of the room to the other, and adding ironically, "I should have thought you were too much occupied with your own parting to pay any attention to mine."

The duke slightly coloured, but passing over this latter remark, continued, "Remember I am acquainted with all your past flirtations."

"I have done with all that," replied Oliver sullenly.

"When Gladstone gives up speechifying I shall believe you have given up flirtation, my good friend. In the meanwhile, don't forget that if Miss Hyacinth displays a flattering preference for your society she is fully convinced you have a ducal coronet to lay at her feet."

"But whatever happens I still remain a man, I suppose?" angrily said Oliver.

"Certainly, and a very handsome and impressionable one; so much so that with your borrowed plumes, superadded to your natural advantages, I have no chance. I am too heavily handicapped with an Adonis as well as a duke for my rival."

"What on earth do you mean, Selmar? Have I ever come between you and Miss Morden?"

"Miss Morden!" exclaimed the duke in well-acted surprise.

"Why, I am old enough to be her father."

"Your manner was certainly very paternal," replied Oliver sarcastically. "Why, Miss Morden is a perfect Hebe. I should be in love with her myself if I did not adore that glorious Hyacinth."

"I should feel deeply distressed by such an assertion if I believed it," said the duke seriously. "But pooh! you have never in your whole life been in love with any one but yourself. And even if you are now undergoing the pangs of a true passion, which I wholly doubt, believe me that I desire to spare you future mortification when I say I have gauged the Misses Parkhursts' characters to their utmost depth. They are pretrifactions of worldliness. I don't wish to be uncomplimentary, Oliver, but mark my words, when the fair Hyacinth learns your true name her feelings towards you will undergo a cooling process by no means flattering to your vanity."

"I was an ass ever to have placed myself in this idiotic position. And you wrong her I am sure. But even supposing the ambition of being a duchess has attractions for her, would not every girl be the same?" generously replied Oliver.

"Well, if you are secure of your conquest, you can prove its

truth later on. In the meanwhile compromise neither yourself nor me, I beg."

"If I do, whose the fault?"

"Mine, I allow, and therefore I warn you. Except inasmuch as we have been their guests and owe them consideration, the Misses Parkhurst are nothing to me. I love Kate Morden."

"I knew it—I knew it! Let me congratulate you, my dear fellow. She adores you," exclaimed Oliver joyously. "And now I am once more my own jolly self, and only hope your confounded strawberry leaves won't irritate you as they have done me."

"Not quite so fast if you please; I do not wish to declare myself too hurriedly. Miss Morden is young yet to know her own mind."

"Then, for my sake, teach it her quickly. But that she loves you, I could swear."

"My vanity is not so great as to be secure of this; therefore, dear friend, bear a little longer with our mutual disguise."

"Have I any alternative?" said Oliver ruefully, taking up his candle. "Good-night, dream of Kate, for I am convinced she is dreaming of you."

Arrived in his own room he exclaimed, "I can never hold out, I know I can't. When she looks at me with that beseeching glance I feel desperate." For the first time in his life Oliver was truly in love.

Had the two men at this point prudently stopped to consider their present actions, they might have avoided much future discomfort. But the ravishing thought that he could secure Kate's affections, while she still remained ignorant of the brilliant future awaiting her, caused the duke to become utterly indifferent to every other consideration. While Oliver, feeling that to his friend he owed his life, deemed it almost ungrateful to put forward his own feelings. And it is fair to say, the duke had not the faintest idea how matters really stood between Hyacinth and Oliver, or to what extent the latter had carried his flirtation.

Soon after the departure of the two men from the Dower House Iris expressed her intention of leaving also. "We are too many women in the house, now that Kate is one of us," she said good-humouredly.

"Where are you going, dear?" asked Hyacinth rather absently.

"To spend some weeks with old Lady Bankwell. You see, she is determined one of us should marry her son. And I am determined to be that one," said Iris laughing.

"Oh, Iris darling! you will never be able to stand his tiresome way of making love. Even when he was making up to me, I could never smother my yawns," said Hyacinth with the deepest gravity.

"My pet," said Iris smiling, "you must not speak disrespectfully of your future brother-in-law. Besides, you are spoilt by

more seductive wooing. Sir Richard is an honourable, charitable man. And if anything were to happen to poor mamma you know we are left nearly penniless. We are not fit to be governesses, and what else could we be?" sadly ended the elder sister.

Hyacinth sighed as she answered, "But it seems dreary for you to have so unromantic an ending to your life, dear Iris."

"I played out my romance long ago, Hyacinth," said her sister quickly. "It ended badly; but I am determined yours shall not. The duke adores you, child, or I know nought of what a man's eyes can tell. But why do you cry, darling?"

"Because your words rejoice me. For I love him, Iris—love him with my whole heart. Of course I like the idea of being a duchess, but if he were poor Smithers, I should love him equally."

"But this is not a transformation scene, Hyacinth, and you shall not only be a duchess, but also marry the man you love, and in your double happiness I shall find amends for the blank in my life," said Iris, kissing her sister fondly.

"What a good sister you are, Iris! I wish you would not throw yourself away on that prosy Sir——"

"Hush, hush!" responded Iris, placing her hand over her sister's mouth.

When next they met, Hyacinth, radiant with love and hope, greeted Oliver with a bewitching shyness that made her doubly irresistible. To repel temptation in her presence was impossible, and intense was Hyacinth's mortification when, after a few unmeaning words, he abruptly left her side. But Oliver was far too deeply in love to be always on his guard, or to be ever flying from the seduction of Hyacinth's society as though he were possessed. Thus one moment he blew hot, the next cold.

In vain he implored the duke to release him from his rash promise by proposing for Kate; the duke could not make up his mind to spoil the romance of his present position. His love had plunged him into a sea of selfishness, and he was jealous even at the thought of Kate's pure affection being diverted from himself by girlish musings on his worldly advantages.

At last finding his position untenable, Oliver determined to tear himself away entirely from Hyacinth's vicinity. She, indignant at his behaviour, had become proudly cold, and deemed herself prepared for the blow, when one evening after dinner Oliver, who was leaving the Dower House early the next morning, followed her into the hall to say good-night. With a beating heart she took the candle with which he presented her, almost dropping it as he said in an agitated voice:

"This is not only good-night, but good-bye, Miss Hyacinth, for I grieve to say I am forced by circumstances over which I have no control to go——" Oliver here stopped; he had not the remotest idea where he was going, and repeated, "to go—to go——"

"To Jericho!" said Hyacinth lightly, though she turned cold,

and her heart seemed suddenly to stand still. But she was determined this false man should see no trace of her sorrow. "Well, duke, this world is not very large, so after all we may meet again. *Au revoir*." So saying she rushed upstairs, turning back on the landing and calling out with a gay little laugh as she kissed her hand to him, "Good-night, duke, and *bon voyage* to—to Jericho." But arrived in her own room, she locked herself in and wept as though her heart would break, murmuring between her sobs:

"I love—oh! how I love him, while he has only flirted and amused himself as I have done with others. Oh! I am cruelly punished. He has heard of my follies and deems me unworthy to be his wife."

Downstairs Oliver fumed and raged up and down the little hall, exclaiming fiercely:

"Cold, heartless flirt, woman without a particle of true feeling! She thinks she has lost her chance of being a duchess, and wishes to show how little she cares for the man. She revenges every injury I have done her sex, that is if they have hearts to be injured."

But though Hyacinth had sobbed herself to sleep, she was a girl of spirit, and in the morning awoke determined still further to show this perfidious duke she did not care a pin for him.

With fresh courage she donned her blue riding habit and accompanied Daphne to the opening meet of the —shire hounds, where she had overheard Oliver express his determination of going.

When he appeared in the field his lover's eye quickly discerned Hyacinth; but, distraction! gay, smiling, and apparently deep in flirtation with Smithers. It had only required a bright smile, a few soft words, to draw this infatuated captain once more to her side. And as she now chatted joyously to him, bowing carelessly to Oliver at the same time, the latter mentally vowed to pound Smithers into the smallest possible atoms on the minutest provocation and on the first opportunity presenting itself. But while he was brooding over this murderous intention the hounds gave cry, and the whole field were immediately in motion, looking in the distance like animated poppies.

Away flew Hyacinth, closely followed by her two adorers, with her golden hair scattering light around her. The excitement of a rattling run was upon the beautiful girl as well as that of love and hope renewed, for she had noted the furious scowl on Oliver's countenance. He was jealous! Why had she never tried this powerful weapon before?

A bold and fearless rider, no man could say they had ever lost a run in Hyacinth's society. She required no gates opened, no lead across hedge or ditch. On this special day she was in a state of desperation. In vain, alarmed at her reckless daring, Smithers cautioned prudence. She only laughed, turning her face to see if Oliver was near. Splendidly mounted on one

of the duke's best hunters, he was not only near, but soon had left Smithers far behind. Still Hyacinth kept the lead. By-and-by they were close to a wide running stream, too broad to jump, but which Hyacinth had often swam her horse across. Boldly gathering up her skirt, she prepared to do so now, forgetful of late tremendous rains and unobservant of the angry turbid appearance of the water.

"Hold! hold!" shouted Oliver in terrible alarm. "I hear the river is dangerous."

Unheeded were his words. Hyacinth had often crossed it before—had not heard of the danger—disregarded it now, and in she plunged, calling back audaciously:

"There is no occasion for you to follow if you are afraid!"

Another moment and horse and rider were battling fiercely for dear life. Alarmed at the force of the current, the terrified horse made no effort to swim, allowing himself to drift with the stream. Quickly Hyacinth recognized her peril. But though she had lost all command of her horse, presence of mind did not desert the brave girl. Weighed down by the weight of her saturated habit, she yet managed to extricate her foot from the stirrup and slipped from her saddle, murmuring softly as the cold waters closed over her:

"He will save me, I am sure."

And she was right. Already having sprung from his horse, Oliver was wading and swimming to his love's rescue. But not without considerable difficulty was he enabled to drag her to the bank, for Hyacinth's splendid figure was not that of a sylph.

When ultimately he laid his beauteous burden on the grass, she was to all appearance insensible. In vain he chafed her cold hands, whispering words of impassioned adoration. Her eyes remained closed, affording him ample opportunity of admiring the contrast of sweeping black lashes resting on a cheek of alabaster.

But wily Hyacinth was not quite so insensible as she appeared. In an ecstasy of joy she was drinking in words she had so longed to hear. But it needed her to be in the peril of death to call them forth, and therefore this laggard lover's fears must be prolonged.

But when, finding tender words unavailing, her rescuer proceeded to kiss first her cold cheek and then her lips, a slight tremulous motion passed over the young girl's frame, while the ruby blood rushed in a torrent to her face. Gently the blue eyes opened, fixing themselves on Oliver's face, as the owner in a faint voice asked the orthodox question of all ladies recovering from a state of insensibility:

"Where am I?"

"In the arms of him who adores you, beloved Hyacinth!" exclaimed Oliver rapturously.

A smile of intense happiness passed over the girl's face, and then without a word, from the combined effects of joy, cold, and fright, she really fainted dead away.

And now Hyacinth's popularity was exemplified, for half the field turned back to her aid, and a carriage being procured, she was quickly conveyed home.

But for the state of excitement in which her icy plunge found her, Hyacinth's accident might have been followed by no bad effects. As it was, before nightfall she was in high fever, and slightly wandering. A telegram quickly brought Iris to her side as the tenderest of nurses.

In the meanwhile the distracted Oliver had confided to the duke how in a moment of terrible anxiety his secret had escaped him. The duke, who was now the happiest of men as Kate's accepted lover, having proposed that morning, hardly seemed to take in the gravity of the position until Oliver said angrily:

"Upon my word, Selmar, I believe you think of nobody but yourself. And I refuse to carry on this farce any longer. Do you understand?"

"It is no longer necessary," replied the duke; "nor should I have continued it had I believed you to be truly in love. But it is my fault you have got into this scrape. And I begin to see the extent of our error when it is too late."

"Yes, Selmar," groaned Oliver, "out of affection for you I have behaved like a scoundrel. Though she uttered no response to my words of adoration, her eloquent eyes spoke a fond avowal of love returned. When she knows the truth she will scorn me as I deserve. But I may even be denied the privilege of her scorn, for she may die. If so, I am her murderer. For I saw she recklessly courted death as she plunged into the surging waters. Oh! I think I will shoot myself," concluded Oliver, pacing up and down in desperation and striking his forehead violently with his clenched hand.

"Pooh! pooh! my dear fellow, don't be melodramatic. This is not a tragedy we are enacting, only the last act of a genteel little comedy. Miss Hyacinth has a splendid constitution, and will be none the worse for her wetting. She owes her life to you; this alone must ensure your forgiveness. In the meanwhile we must throw ourselves on the mercy of the court, confessing our errors to Lady Lod——"

"Not Lady Lodore!" shouted Oliver. "She knows I have declared my love, and has already embraced me effusively as her son-in-law and the preserver of her daughter, who she says is constantly calling out my name—that is, yours. Oh! Selmar, my position is awful."

"No, no, old boy. We will take Miss Parkhurst as judge and jury. All blame shall be thrown on my shoulders."

"Well it may," groaned Oliver.

Though the duke was supremely happy, he was terribly disturbed at the awkward confession into which he was hurried.

A sterner judge than Iris they could not have chosen. In haughty silence she listened to the guilty one's confession,

neither by word or sign betraying the anger and mortification raging at her heart on behalf of her sister. But when the duke ceased speaking, she answered sternly and proudly :

"No words of mine, duke, could, I should imagine, reproach you more keenly than your own conscience. The selfish disguise assumed by the Duke of Melton," Iris spoke with withering scorn, "was as dishonouring to himself as to the woman he proposed to woo. And had you not been so egotistically engaged in the pursuit of your own happiness, you must have seen what hopes Captain Merrivale's attentions held out to my sister, who would, however, not marry even a duke if he failed to inspire her with respect as well as love," concluded Iris with passionate indignation.

"Forgive me, I implore, Miss Parkhurst. You do indeed make me realize the full extent of my error, but my friend is blameless. He sought to please me. He loves your sister with his whole heart and soul."

"Your friend should never have given in to your selfish wishes. He has attractions which *you* do not possess"—Iris's words flowed with uncivil and scathing bitterness—"attractions sufficient to cause any woman to love him for himself. Whether my sister does or does not, of this he may be sure, she will never marry a man who has behaved as he has."

So saying, Iris swept out of the room like a very Juno, leaving the duke utterly crushed and humiliated, and moreover deeply grieved at the ungenerous estimate he had formed of the Misses Parkhursts' character. In the passage Iris met Kate, weeping copiously. She could have beaten the poor little future duchess with pleasure. To think of this chit having won the prize instead of her glorious, beautiful sister !

"Well, Kate, I congratulate you," she said, in tones anything but congratulatory.

"Oh ! don't, please don't," exclaimed Kate piteously. "Oh ! Iris, I am so sorry, though I love him—oh ! so much. But I wanted Hyacinth to be the duchess. I did indeed. I shall never know how to be one properly. But how could I know he was a duke ?"

"How indeed ! But don't be a goose, child," said Iris, unable to restrain a laugh. "I have no doubt in time you will learn to be a duchess. There, there, don't cry, Katie," said Iris kindly, "or your precious duke will fancy I have been ill-treating you. And after all we keep him in the family."

Iris spoke lightly, but her heart was full of sorrow for the sister she adored, and for whom she had anticipated such a brilliant future, and her brow clouded as she entered the darkened room where Hyacinth lay. As yet no confidence had passed between the sisters, for the doctor had forbidden the invalid all excitement. But as Iris approached Hyacinth's bed, the invalid stretched out her arms, whispering feebly as they encircled Iris's neck, "He loves me—he loves me."

The elder sister was in despair. She dared not divulge her mortifying intelligence in Hyacinth's present state, and had to wait for her convalescence, when as gently as she could she made known the bitter truth. What was her surprise when, instead of the indignation she anticipated, Hyacinth burst into a merry laugh, saying :

"I see it all now. How well he has behaved."

"Horror upon horrors ! The news has turned her brain," thought Iris. And very slowly, with impressive tenderness, she said :

"Darling, I think you have not understood me. He is *not* the duke."

"Oh ! I am so glad," replied Hyacinth, with tears in her eyes, "for now I can prove I love him for himself, which he evidently doubted."

In vain assured of her sister's perfect sanity, Iris dilated on Oliver's poverty and iniquities. Hyacinth only repeated :

"I love him ! I love him ! He saved my life, and according to your own account only erred to save his friend. But still he deserves a little punishment. Ah ! Iris, so do I, for though love has killed ambition, my love began with it. Let him still believe I am in ignorance of the trick played upon us. His punishment shall be to reveal it himself."

But Oliver's punishment had to be postponed, for that very day he received a pressing summons to his aunt's dying bed. In the meanwhile, Lady Lodore, made acquainted with the fraud, as she expressed it, practised on her credulity, also took to her bed, the poor lady's irritation doubly increased by Daphne's announcement that she had at last said "Yes" to Major Banger's annual proposal. Secretly she had long liked him, and Hyacinth's fiasco had decided her to crown the major's long devotion. A terrible fit of hysterics followed her announcement, and Lady Lodore was only restored to partial equanimity when Iris informed her she was the happy affianced wife of Sir Richard Bankwell.

A few days later Oliver returned, and feeling like a culprit was ushered into the presence of the woman he loved.

He longed to throw himself at her feet. But a true passion had made the flirting Oliver diffident, while his humiliating position deprived him of all power of speech.

In sweet convalescence Hyacinth reclined on her sofa, looking adorable in her flowing muslins, and the carnation suffusing her lovely face, as with regal dignity she held out her hand, saying sweetly :

"Come hither, *duke* !"

Oliver winced as though that fair hand had thrust a red-hot needle through his most sensitive nerve. That shrinking movement was not lost upon Hyacinth, who smiled with malice as she continued :

"I have been longing to see you, *duke*, to thank you for having saved me from a watery grave, *duke*."

Oliver, who held Hyacinth's hand, here dropped it and,

furiously red, attempted to speak, but his mouth was dry and parched, the words died in his throat, and Hyacinth continued slowly, sweeping her eyes up at him :

"I feel I owe *your grace* a debt of gratitude I can never repay, and which makes me the more regret the—the foolish words that escaped you, to—to which——"

Here Hyacinth covered her face with her handkerchief, as though to disguise her confusion.

"Foolish words, adored Hyacinth ! words of truth and honesty. Hear me, I implore ; I wish—to——"

"No, no. I may not deceive you, for to those words of the Duke of Melton I can give but one answer. I love another."

Hyacinth gave a convulsive sob behind her pocket handkerchief.

"You love another ?" gasped Oliver.

"Yes, ye—es. I love Captain——"

"Not Smithers ?" shouted Oliver in a voice of thunder.

"There are other captains in the world besides Smithers," purred from Hyacinth's lips, as suddenly taking the handkerchief from her face she looked up at Oliver with eyes brimful of love and mischief.

In an instant he read the truth in those blue eyes, and throwing himself on his knees, kissed her hand passionately, exclaiming :

"You know all, and yet forgive me. Oh ! I have suffered such tortures."

"Not undeserved, sir. How dared you think you could come among the Misses Parkhurst and not fall in love with one of them ?"

"I loved you from the first moment I saw you, darling."

"Heigho ! so I am not to be a duchess after all," said Hyacinth, gently disengaging herself from Oliver's embrace. "But don't think I am not a wee bit disappointed. And remember poverty tries love. Are you prepared for its many rubs ? If not," she added gravely, "we had better part at once, Oliver, for I believe this to be your name," she smiled archly.

"Generous, lovely Hyacinth ! by your side I could face the world as a chimney sweeper."

"Thanks, sir. But I am not partial to soot," she laughed merrily.

"And you shall not be put to the proof, my beloved. For my aunt has left me everything she possessed. I am no longer a poor man."

Hyacinth opened her eyes very wide, saying :

"I shall be able to keep a maid ?"

"Two, if you like."

"I shall never have to pack ?"

"If the maids are incapable, we will hire a professional packer."

"Then hurrah ! No longer do I bemoan my lost coronet," exclaimed the girl gaily, adding with deep earnestness :

"Ah, Oliver, true love, when it does exist in a woman's heart, leaves no room for ambition."

SOME MEN I HAVE KNOWN.

By MRS. H. LOVETT CAMERON,

AUTHOR OF "IN A GRASS COUNTRY," ETC., ETC.

I.—THE BEAUTY MAN.

II.—THE MALE FLIRT.

THE BEAUTY MAN.

THERE is a much-abused person in the world at whom no one fails to have a fling, whom worldlings and moralists alike have from time immemorial held up as a warning and a snare, who is seldom, if ever, credited with any solid or man-like qualities, whose gifts, like Dead Sea fruit, are but as dust and ashes, and whose glorious distinction is but his own undoing. I allude to the handsome, or, as he is aptly termed, "The Beauty Man."

Beauty is, we are told upon the very best authority, "the gift of the gods," and divers poets have also assured us that it is "a joy for ever," that it "draws us with a single hair," that it "hath strange power," and is also "its own excuse for being." Wherefore then doth it come to pass that a handsome man in these latter days is discredited and sneered at, and that in the minds of hundreds of well educated and intelligent persons his appearance, instead of being an "excuse" for anything at all, is actually prejudicial to his interests and a drawback to his popularity?

In propounding a moral problem, it is as well to go down at once to the root and origin of the subject at issue, and it has appeared to me that the causes of this perversion of the public opinion of English men and women of the present day are not very difficult to discover.

They are twofold, and lie, firstly, in the extreme rarity with which a handsome man is met with, and secondly in the injudicious treatment to which—when he is found—the *rara avis* is invariably subjected.

English women are justly and deservedly distinguished for beauty. There is hardly another nation in Europe whose capital can boast of so many beautiful women as can London. Their beauty is of so many varied kinds, of so many shades and gradations, that each one only enhances the other, and that no one type is repeated sufficiently often to become wearisome.

This is perhaps the chiefest charm of English women. They are all so different to one another. The Milanese women are a lovely race, yet every Milanese lady one meets is but the repetition of the last. One Spanish woman resembles another Spanish woman, and one Viennese differeth but little in glory from the other. But in our own country the mixed race, Saxon, Norman and Dane, intermingled with countless other strains from every nationality under the sun, has produced so varied a programme that the eyes are never satiated and the mind is never oppressed by the sameness which in other countries is apt to pall so fatally upon the taste.

English women are fair as lilies or dark as Southern hours; they are slender and graceful as the grasses of the field or they are massive and Juno-like in their proportions; they have eyes and hair of every shade under the sun, and there is no similarity either in their features or their figures. The consequence is that, as a rule, a pretty English woman is not wont to consider herself and her appearance as anything out of the ordinary way. If she is conscious of her beauty, she knows also that there are hundreds of other women who not only are as beautiful as herself, but whose style of beauty may very possibly be preferred to her own; she is seldom jealous of the good looks of her fellow women, and she is scarcely ever overweeningly vain of her own; she knows that the men who flatter her to-day will pay court to another to-morrow, and the homage she may have gained in one ball-room last night will be transferred to somebody else who may outshine her to-night in another. That is why our London beauties are seldom ungenerous to each other; they understand that the mind of man is fickle and prone to change above all created things, and that raven tresses are frequently preferred to gold. Because her own dark eyes are paramount to-day she does not forget that forget-me-not blue ones may steal away her adorer's fancy to-morrow, so that she is perpetually on her probation as it were, and ever ready to acknowledge the superior claims that her friends may possess to admiration.

Now with men things are very different. Where there are twenty beautiful women in a room, there will scarcely be found one really handsome man.

English men are manly-looking; cheery in manner; attractive from a certain clean smartness essentially their own, but they are very seldom handsome. They are indeed not often even stalwart in build, nor imposing in the matter of figure. As a rule, the young Englishman of the present day is neither very tall nor particularly well made. A big, broad-shouldered fellow is the exception, not the rule, in a London drawing-room. The scions of our noble houses are for the most part undersized and narrow-chested, and not all their Eton and University education has been able to make of them a well-grown or a fine-looking race.

When you come to their faces it is even worse. How seldom, when walking along the street, does one meet a really beautiful face amongst the men who pass by. Like their sisters they are of all types and shades of colourings, but unlike them, there is but little regularity of feature or symmetry of form amongst them. There are noses of all shapes—snub, hooked, *retroussé*, red noses, crooked noses and long noses—but never a nose amongst them all that is fashioned after a Grecian or a heroic model. You see many a pleasant face and many a clever one; faces that attract one unconsciously, whose smile is delightful, whose expression is frank and amiable, but a handsome face is but very rarely to be met with.

The inevitable consequence of this rarity is that the Beauty Man is supremely conscious of his distinction above the common herd, and is, as a rule, quite ridiculously conceited. Of course, there will be hundreds of women who will vie with one another to spoil him and to foster his vanity to its uttermost; for the old poets, who have hymned it, are not so far wrong after all, and *Beauty* is a God-given thing in the abstract still, whether it be met with in man or in woman; and a handsome fellow is a handsome fellow still in women's eyes, and will be so, no doubt, unto the end of time. So that there are other things besides his looking-glass which will teach the Beauty Man how great is his own value and how stupendous is the power which it is his to wield over the hearts and fancies of the fair sex. As he enters a room, he knows that he possesses that which other men have not, and the very consciousness of it is his ruin; he is very soon spoilt out of all knowledge, flattered out of all manliness, puffed up with a delight in himself which he has not the grace or the wit to conceal. As a necessary consequence he becomes arrogant and ill-mannered; he does not think it worth his while to make himself agreeable, and his handsome head becomes rapidly emptied of all save self-sufficiency and self-conceit.

Very soon the evil creates its own cure; a reaction sets in even amongst those who have pandered the most to his vanity. He is dubbed an ass and a fool, an insufferable puppy and an intolerable coxcomb. No good thing, in the minds of all sensible persons, can be credited to come out of him, and no intelligent woman cares to be thought foolish enough to prefer his society.

The fickle multitude sets to work to throw its small but sharp-sided stones at him.

"Mr. Adonis?" cries one fair lady; "Oh yes, I know him, of course—what a fool he is!"

"Very handsome though!"

"Yes, but so conceited. And he has no brains; nothing on earth to talk about but himself and his successes."

"Oh! I thought he admired you, my dear," retorts her friend.

"Admire *me*! Good gracious, no! Mr. Adonis admires himself so extremely that he has no time to admire anybody else."

And women do not like that. They had rather be worshipped by a Cyclops who is clever than tolerated by an Apollo who is taken up with himself.

The Beauty Man has, moreover, so great a regard for his valuable peculiarity, that he is exceedingly cautious not to underrate himself. No ordinary woman is good enough for him; the lady whom he singles out for his preference must be, like himself, of superhuman beauty. He cannot be decently civil to anybody else. *The* reigning beauty of the day—the woman who is the fashion of the year—that for him, or nothing! Talent, wit, fascination are alike thrown away upon him. The most charming conversationalist, the best educated of critics, the most popular of all the clever women in the world of art or letters is thrown away upon him, and meets with nothing better at his hands than cold, contemptuous glances, and a bow of studied indifference and disdain as he hurries past her to bestow his beautiful presence upon some one whose good looks are, he deems, sufficiently recognized to merit his notice. Everywhere else he is throwing himself away!

Poor Beauty Man! No wonder that the world is down upon him; that women with sharp-witted tongues, aye, and sharp-pointed pens, too, are not slow to repay him for his insolence and his vanity; that they are ready to join in the hue and cry against him, and to declare with the sage and the moralist that beauty is but skin deep, and fadeth as doth the flower of the field; and that a handsome man looks well enough as a statue or a picture, but that in real life he is but a brainless barber's block, and is unworthy of serious attention at the hands of any rational or well-educated being. And so the verdict goes forth that to woman shall be left the burden of beauty, which she can so gracefully and easily bear, but that a man is best without the "fatal gift," that only degrades and hampers him, and renders him incapable of any other good thing upon the face of the earth.

Talking about "Beauty Men" leads me not unnaturally to the consideration of another type of man whom we all know very well indeed, and whom, speaking as a woman, I feel a certain diffidence in mentioning—

THE MALE FLIRT.

The Male Flirt is an individual not confined to our own days, nor yet even to our own century. From time immemorial this terrible yet fascinating person has scourged society just as the pirates and buccaneers of old are said to have scourged the seas with their powerful and irresistible charm. There is a weird attraction about him, a fearful joy at his approach, a horrible and unnatural delight at the bare mention of his name. Like the

vampire of German fairy-lore, he subjugates the senses and curdles the blood at one and the same time; he is delightful and yet alarming, enticing and yet appalling, all at once. The male flirt is the terror of mothers, and the detestation of the whole race of elderly aunts and chaperones of all kinds. We have all in turn been warned against him, all cautioned to steel our hearts to his advances and to barricade the portals of our souls against his serpent-like depredations. Yet so contradictory and so foolish is the nature of woman, that there is not one of us, young or old, who has not at some time or other of our lives fallen a willing victim to this seductively dangerous individual. The male flirt is made so neither by practice nor yet by education—he is born so; just as genius, or cooking, or mathematics is born with a man, so is flirting in its higher branches implanted within him by nature. He is not often a handsome man, although he is invariably a pleasant one, and he is not as a rule popular amongst his fellow-men. Fathers and brothers eye him with suspicion, as something which they do not wholly comprehend; whilst husbands turn cold shoulders upon his blandishments, or at best treat him with a freezing politeness. Men, in short, look upon him askance, and one and all unite in running him down—but perhaps that is only because they are jealous of him.

But amongst the women he is a king. He saunters into a room with that natural air of ease and confidence which the knowledge of his power engenders within him, and at once every feminine heart is set fluttering and hoping; his hostess welcomes him with an unusual cordiality, and with two hands held out impulsively to grasp his, so that he is perforce obliged to linger a little at her side; and then he glances round with lazy deliberation and selects his victim, and straightway one woman is rendered deliriously happy, whilst fifty become immediately sensible that their fondest hopes are a failure, and are filled with unspeakable misery, envy, and jealousy! When the male flirt is talking to the one favoured lady of his choice, he is able instantly to convey to her the, no doubt erroneous impression, that she is the one and only woman on the face of the whole world with whom it is the slightest pleasure to him to converse. He never says so in words—he pays her no compliments, makes no direct observations upon her dress or her looks; his flattery is of too delicate a nature for such coarse and outspoken methods—only his manner implies unmistakable adoration, and his eyes are filled with unutterable things. He has a habit of leaving his sentences unfinished; of beginning a great deal and of breaking short into significant silences; of sighing frequently, and of looking sad and sentimental. Sometimes again he smiles into her eyes with a sort of rapture, and lowers his voice mysteriously with caressing whispers that have untold meanings in their almost inaudible murmurings.

Yet he never commits himself—not he! He is far too clever to be caught in the net he spreads so cunningly, too wary to proceed too far along that dangerous road upon which it is so keen a pleasure to him to venture.

If the woman is young and marriageable his wits are more especially sharpened to take care of himself; for he has not the very faintest intention of landing himself into the toils of matrimony, nor the remotest notion of converting the blushing girl whom he is courting in so lover-like a fashion into his wife. He would like her to be in love with him, but he is not in the very least in love with her; and when he has amused himself to the very uttermost at her expense, he throws her over without a shadow of remorse or compunction, and takes himself off to fresh fields and pastures new.

Woe, then, to the luckless maiden who, regardless of the warnings of her guardians, has been so foolish as to allow herself to be carried away by the fascinations of the dangerous man! Her day is soon over, her reign very speedily at an end, and she is left to become a laughing stock to her fellow-women, and to bewail her desertion with heart burnings and bitter jealousy.

The male flirt is the *mauvais sujet* of society. Every woman cries shame upon him, and yet every woman has a secret tenderness at the bottom of her heart towards him. He is so reckless and so audacious, such a very Lothario in his goings on, that do what he will, he is always pardoned for his sins and treated with an indulgence which he very little deserves. For after all he is a cold-hearted, calculating individual, with no other motive for his conduct than an overweening vanity, whose insatiable appetite he must feed at all costs and at every risk. Small matter it is to him if he hurt a too impressionable heart, or raise hopes which he has not the faintest intention of fulfilling; to enjoy himself and to render a woman conspicuous by his attentions are the only ends which he has in view. Yet now and again it happens that the male flirt meets his match and is paid back in his own coin.

Now and then some married woman sets herself seriously to work to meet him upon his own ground, and to make a fool of him as he has made a fool of others—then indeed he meets at last with his due reward, and there is joy and triumph all along the ranks of his deserted victims. For there must always be some vulnerable spot even in the hardest and most callous of men, and a clever woman of the world knows very well that if she cannot injure a man's heart, she can at all events wound that which is a far more important item of his nature—his vanity.

It is this counterbalancing influence, no doubt, which robs the male flirt of a large portion of his power of evil, and which makes a too indulgent public resign itself with patience to his machinations. He is a destroying angel, no doubt, but sometimes he gets destroyed himself, and then there are pæans of joy at his dis-

comfiture, and shouts of delight over his downfall. Moreover, heartless and unprincipled although he may be, yet it is impossible not to feel a certain amount of honest admiration for his gifts.

He sails so easily upon the surface of society's pitfalls, swims so comfortably with the tide, knows so exactly when to retire and how to obliterate himself in the very nick of time, that one cannot help crediting him with high and rare powers of self-preservation.

For he knows perfectly well how to compromise a woman's name, and yet shift the blame from his own shoulders on to hers directly it becomes prudent to beat a retreat. He is a very master in the art of innuendo; he understands how to uplift his eyebrows and to shrug his shoulders; to smile a little cynical smile of deprecation; and with a faint gesture of the hands, how to express things which, if they were to be spoken in words, would brand him as a blackguard and a villain.

"Poor little woman!" his silent pantomime seems to say; "is it my fault that she fell over head and ears in love with me? Can a man be blamed if a lady throws herself at his head? and is he not an ass of the purest water if he turn his back upon the *bonnes fortunes* which come tumbling unsought into his arms!"

And so the fickle tide of public opinion backs him up, and the woman goes to the wall and gets all the blame and the shame, and the man gets off scot free, and goes on his way rejoicing and chuckling to himself over his cleverness and good luck.

But that is only the way of the world, and will be so, no doubt, until the end of it, so that women can never complain or rebel against the unalterable laws of it.

Meanwhile the male flirt starts afresh, and soon distinguishes himself anew, and women continue to greet him with smiles and to surrender themselves with gladness to his fascinations, refusing steadfastly to profit by the experience of others, and preferring with a blind persistence to purchase that commodity for themselves. And bad as he is we could not do very well without him—society would deplore his loss, and life be insipid without his dangerous presence. There is ever a romance about his history, and the halo of a mysterious nebula over his surroundings. And so it comes to pass that the male flirt continues to be welcomed and made much of amongst us, and that we are still "to his faults a little blind, and to his virtues very kind."

A DAY-DREAM.

By J. SALE LLOYD,

AUTHOR OF "SHADOWS OF THE PAST," "RUTH EVERINGHAM," "WE COSTELIONS,"
"GOLD AND SILVER," ETC., ETC., ETC.

THERE is yet a lovely unspoiled seaside nook in our ever-altering and supposed-to-be improving island.

Few tourists have even heard of it, and to prevent their encroaching upon its peaceful territory and breaking its refreshing quietude, the secret of its whereabouts must remain a mystery.

It lies in a tiny bay, all wooded down to the water's brink, with green hills rising at the back, and away to the right there is good cover for game in the thick half-wild tangle of undergrowth, where the white-tailed rabbits scurry about by hundreds, or sit sunning themselves in inanimate brown heaps of lazy luxury. A sudden bend inland discloses a beautiful estuary, which winds its way among the foot of the hills, looking soft and silent, with scarcely a ripple to move its surface.

Cottages are dotted about here and there, covered with roses, and jasmine, and clematis, and the gardens are filled with flowers.

A picturesque old-world house stands alone upon the rising ground overlooking the sea, sheltered from every rough blast, with oranges and lemons growing upon its walls, and myrtles in full blossom under its abbey-like windows.

From the hills inland, the view is pastoral and idyllic; there is a wood of tender green larches, with a background of dark blue pines.

Fields of waving golden corn, fields of emerald turnip, and purple beets, and mangel.

Hedge-rows festooned with wild roses, briony, and eglantine, carpeted with primroses, violets, and ferns.

Narrow winding lanes, all overhung with trees, with rustic stiles leading from them across the country, and in the distance lay a village, from the cottages of which the white smoke went up like summer clouds into the azure sky; and the steeple of the old church was peeping from among the many-generation-old trees.

Captain Bertram Berkeley, who was quartered with his regiment in the same county, noticed it while out sailing in the regimental yacht, nestling like a tiny gem in its verdant setting, and a fancy seized him to pay it a visit.

There was not one of his brother-officers of his own standing whom he did not pester to accompany him thither, till it became almost a joke among them.

"My dear fellow," remonstrated his great friend, Hubert Falkner, "we should be buried alive in such a dull place; why, there can be nothing on earth to do there. Go, by all means, if you want a fit of the blues, but don't ask any one else to share your fate."

Well, he obtained leave of absence, and he *did* go!

They took him to the little bay in the yacht, and put him on shore with his small portmanteau, promising to return for him that day week, and sailed away again, laughing at Bertram's folly.

The first afternoon he enjoyed thoroughly. Everything was so new, and bright, and fresh, and lovely.

He found a quaint ivy-clad little inn, where the landlady was apple-cheeked and good-looking, and he intrusted himself for the week to her tender mercies; and having ascertained from her the prettiest walks, he started off for a round, inhaling the sea breezes with avidity, and ended his day upon the beach, where he sat till dusk, lazily throwing stones into the water.

That night he wrote to his friend:

"DEAR FALKNER,—

"You were wrong not to come; it is charming! Jolly little inn and pretty little hostess. Lovely walks; all I want is a companion. You had better join me.

"Yours,

"B. B."

But Captain Falkner did not see it in the same light, and Bertram Berkeley remained alone.

The day after, he followed a lane which he had not noticed before. It appeared to lead up to the rough and tangled undergrowth upon the hill-side, and he thought he might get that way to the sea.

Suddenly he stopped, for before him lay a home which was a perfect idyl. A many-gabled, golden-thatched cottage of considerable size, showing on all sides the signs of affluence. It was covered with rare climbing plants; the very air was redolent with the perfume of the roses of all sorts, which clustered in every available spot.

The fences were rustic, and entwined with ivy and virginian creeper.

The lawns were smooth as a billiard-table and soft as moss.

The flower-beds were filled with blossom; but it was neither upon house, nor lawn, nor rustic work, nor flowers, that his eyes were fixed, but upon the figure of a girl of some twenty years of

age, reclining in a low garden chair, intently reading a book; and the more he gazed the greater grew his admiration.

She was totally unaware of his presence, and it was evident that spectators were not usual in that hidden corner, all among the trees, and hedge-rows, and tangled undergrowth.

It was quite a surprise to find this little paradise of perfume there; as though some fairy had conjured it up with her magic wand, and the recumbent girl was fit for the princess in the fairy tale. She had masses of gold-brown waving hair hanging down loosely about her shoulders and almost touching the ground, and the sunbeams were giving it their own bright shades.

She had evidently been out to bathe, and was letting the sun and air dry her luxuriant tresses for her.

Her eyes were hidden by their long fringed lashes, but the rest of the oval face was perfect.

In repose the mouth vied with Cupid's bow in shape; the nose was short and straight, the ears like tiny sea-shells, the chin dimpled, the brow broad and white and intellectual, partly hidden by short curls, which the water had but made more wavy.

She was dressed in a plain white flannel costume, which clung to her figure and revealed its perfect symmetry, while a pretty foot in a neat black shoe and stocking was peeping from beneath the white skirt, and Bertram saw that the ankle was slender and the instep arched, and the white hands and rounded arms shown by her somewhat short sleeves were none the less to his taste.

Upon her lap lay a tiny Yorkshire terrier asleep, and she stroked it while she read.

"What a girl! A regular Venus!" murmured the watcher, "And has a mind too; how attentively she reads."

How long he stood regarding her he never knew, but it was, he admitted to himself, a considerable time.

She got impatient with her book, the author had not pleased her.

"Rubbish!" she cried; "sentimental trash!" and flung the volume aside.

"Sensible, too," said Captain Berkeley; "by Jove! she's a *rara avis*."

Her sudden movement had awoke her fluffy little rat of a dog, and he began to bark furiously, with a sharp "yap, yap," for he had at last found out the near vicinity of a stranger.

Bertram's goddess turned suddenly, and looked searchingly towards the spot where he stood.

"Heavens! what eyes! Blue as a sapphire in the sunlight, with black fringed lashes!" Soldier as he was, and carpet knight, he could do nothing but stare, dazzled by her unusual beauty.

A shade of annoyance crossed the beautiful face as she turned away and walked towards the house, fondling the happy little dog as she went along.

How gracefully she walked, with an ease and elasticity in her

movements not often seen. He continued watching, but the white-robed figure appeared no more.

He found his road to the sea, happily unconscious that it was a private one and that he was trespassing, and returned the same way.

His divinity was singing, and her voice was as sweet and beautiful as her face :

"Why should we parted be, Kathleen Aroon?
When thy fond heart's with me, Kathleen Aroon."

Why indeed? How he longed to go in and say all sorts of insane and impossible things to her!

He made a perch for himself upon an ivy-clad wall, and listened until voice and piano ceased; then he heard her call her horrid little dog, and she came to the hall door with it in her arms, and kissed it and called it her darling, and the little wretch found him out again and began once more to yap like a child's toy, and ashamed to be caught watching her, he slid from his hiding-place upon the ground out of sight.

"Little stupid!" she said, looking around, "no one is there;" and because the small animal wriggled so she set it down. She had asserted that no one was there, but Tiny knew better, and having squeezed itself through the rustic work it vigorously attacked the captain's stockinged legs, for he had a shapely calf, and was indulging in knickerbockers.

The little brute "worried" him so terribly that he beat a hasty retreat and left it in possession of the field.

That evening he smoked profoundly, drawing at his cigar like a man in deep thought; moreover, a rare thing for Bertram Berkeley, he dreamed—and his dreams were of blue eyes and golden hair.

His first waking thought was of the princess of the fairy cottage.

"She bathes," he said. "I will go down to the sea shore;" and sprang out of bed and went without even asking for his breakfast, and regardless of the cravings of the inner man, he stayed on the beach till twelve, but she never came. Hungry and dissatisfied he returned to the inn and ate his burnt-up viands, which had been waiting for him since ten o'clock, and started for that narrow lane once more. This time he was not disappointed; there she was!

Her hair was plaited and coiled up, and she looked like a young queen, and in his mind he apostrophized her as a Juno.

He hid behind some thick shrubs, and prayed that his enemy might not discover him. A sun hat was in her left hand, and she placed it upon her head, and turning to a mowing-machine which stood upon the lawn, she set to work with a will to cut the grass, and the sharp bright blades revolved as the verdant atoms flew before her.

"Strong and muscular, too," he said admiringly; "no doctor's bills for her! What a wife she will make!"

The grass was finished and the bright vision vanished, and once more the thoughtful mood descended upon the captain.

He was up again early the next morning and down upon the beach, but his divinity was earlier still, and was already in the water, dressed in the prettiest of French bathing costumes, and swimming about like a fish.

When she perceived the stranger she swam behind a projecting rock and darted with wonderful agility through the wooded path up the hill-side and out of sight.

"And modest!" cried Bertram with enthusiasm; "I wish to goodness I knew her."

He had his wish, in a measure, that afternoon. He met her accidentally out walking, and Tiny was with her.

For once he blessed that dog. He snarled at a strong fox terrier, who immediately bowled him over, with the evident intention of making mince-meat of him.

Here was a grand opportunity! No one disliked the idea of hydrophobia more than Bertram Berkeley, but he was not the man to lose such a chance. He rushed to the rescue, and administering a severe chastisement upon the bellicose animal, delivered the small creature in safety to its anxious mistress.

"Oh, thank you, very, very much!" she said eagerly. "It was so good of you to save my little pet. I am *most* grateful to you;" and she raised her beautiful blue eyes to his face, while his heart beat with a heavy thud, worthy of the Nasmyth hammer.

He was a handsome fellow, and she acknowledged the fact to herself as she looked up to his animated countenance—the clear, dark eyes, the closely-cropped hair and clean-shaved bronzed face—save for the heavy brown moustache—the tall manly figure, and erect carriage.

"It has been more than a pleasure to serve you," he murmured, raising his hat chivalrously. "I am delighted I was upon the spot; such savage dogs ought to be muzzled."

He turned as he spoke and walked by her side.

"So far out of London such regulations are not enforced," she answered with a smile.

"No, but they ought to be if hydrophobia is to be stamped out of England."

"I hope you have not let that animal bite you?" she said anxiously.

"Oh dear no! What a lovely little place this is!"

"Yes. You are a stranger here?" she said interrogatively.

"Quite. I confess I should prefer having a companion, but I have enjoyed my stay here so far; they take great care of me at the inn."

"They are very respectable people," she returned demurely.

"What an exquisite little cottage yours is," he said, after a pause; "do you know I saw you in your garden a day or two since."

"Yes, I recognized you again," she returned quietly. "Tiny rather objected to you, but he did not know you would prove a friend in need to him," she ended with a sunny laugh.

"No. He was decidedly antagonistic," he answered, laughing too.

"Do you want to muzzle *him*?" she asked.

"I'm afraid so; if the thing is to be done at all it should be done properly, but if any dog in the world is exempted that one should be Tiny."

"Because he is so amiable?" she queried.

"No, because his mistress is," replied he gallantly.

"That was well turned," she laughed; "and now I must wish you good-day; our roads lie apart, I am going home."

A look of regret passed across his features, and his eyes fell upon a cluster of delicate Marshal Niel roses upon her shoulder.

"What exquisite blossoms!" he said; "may I ask a great favour?"

"You have done me one," she answered graciously, "and have certainly the right to demand one in return."

"I haven't a flower in my room," he said in a low voice; "may I crave one of your roses for my table?"

"One would be of little use—you are welcome to the whole bunch, they will fill a small vase," she answered readily, and unpinning them she placed them in his hand with a natural unconcerned bow, as she turned in the direction of her golden-thatched cottage with her dog in her arms.

"Grateful, and generous, and affectionate," he decided, and pressed the roses to his lips. That night he wrote again to his friend:

"DEAR FALKNER,—

"*I have met my fate.* It is no use your coming for me; I shall get my leave extended. She is enchanting! It is serious this time, old fellow, so don't laugh.

"Yours ever,

"B. B."

He haunted that lane. Sometimes he spoke to her over the fence; she was very gracious to him, but she did not ask him in.

Once she was walking in the garden with an elderly man.

"Her father," he told himself. "What a nice-looking old fellow; I must get hold of *him*, and then it will be all right.

He telegraphed to Covent Garden for a bouquet of rare exotics to be sent down to him by parcels post. They came, and he went and left them at the house himself, with his card attached, and underneath he wrote, "In grateful return for the roses," and closed the box once more.

A neat maid received it from his hands, and by her "*Merci, monsieur*," he discovered she was a Frenchwoman.

He asked no questions, and left no message, not wishing to expose his ignorance of even his lady's name.

He walked on, but he was restless, and returned once more and sat upon the wall to watch. Surely his divinity would come out soon. She did, with the garden hose in her hand, and set to work diligently to water. Suddenly she turned it in the captain's direction, and soused him through and through. Then, with a silvery laugh, quickly checked, she made her apologies.

"Dear me, Captain Berkeley!" she said with much apparent concern, "I'm afraid I have sprinkled you a little."

"Sprinkled" him! He was wet through; but he vowed it was "nothing," and that he "liked it," and she thanked him so sweetly for the bouquet, that he was quite happy, only his happiness was short-lived, for she had a pressing engagement and hastened indoors at once. He sauntered to the inn, and changed his clothes, then started for a walk, *thinking of her*.

A dog-cart was dashing along the road, and suddenly a cheery voice aroused him.

"Hallo, Berkeley! Where on earth have you sprung from? Who would ever have expected you to turn up in this quiet corner?" and the speaker handed the reins to his cockaded groom and jumped down to greet his friend and old brother-officer, shaking him warmly by the hand.

"I may very well return the compliment, La Coste," laughed Bertram Berkeley. "I have never once seen you since you left us at 'Gib.' two years ago; fancy my meeting you in this quiet place, when no quarters used to be gay enough for you."

"Ah! I've sown all my wild oats, old fellow, and married, and settled down into the bargain; and what's more, I don't regret it."

"Tant mieux pour vous!" I fear there are not many such prizes in the matrimonial market."

"Can't say. I never had a bad opinion of the sex, as you are aware, and *my* wife has raised my estimate of womenkind."

"Lucky man!"

"I echo your sentiment. I suppose you're still adamant! No one has made an impression, eh?"

Captain Berkeley positively flushed under the bronze, and thoughtfully pulled his moustache.

"By Jove! you're in for it," laughed Major La Coste. "Well, come and dine with us to-night, and I will introduce you to my wife, and you can tell me all about it over our cigar after dinner."

"What, you are living here then?"

"Yes! We have a pretty little box. Where are you staying? I'll stroll down and take you back in triumph; it will be quite a treat to hear all the news of the old regiment."

"I'll come with pleasure; I'm putting up at the little inn. What time do you dine?"

"Seven, and I'll fetch you at a quarter to," and with a friendly nod, the major jumped up once more into his dog-cart.

"Can I take you anywhere, Berkeley?"

"No thanks, I'll continue my walk;" and so the friends parted.

Major La Coste arrived with military punctuality, and there was a strange smile upon his handsome face and lurking in the depths of his fine grey eyes.

"Are you ready?" he asked. "We must not keep dinner waiting—your cook is the last person in the world whom you should offend."

They chatted briskly as they walked up the lane.

"Here we are," said La Coste, throwing open his gate; "pretty little place, is it not? But perhaps you may have seen it before, in your rambles."

"You don't live *here*!" stammered his visitor; "I thought—I didn't think——"

"Of course you didn't, old fellow; come in and see my wife."

Without one word, Bertram Berkeley followed him.

Mechanically he hung up his hat in the hall, mechanically he went with him into the room, of which he flung open the door, with a strange feeling as of a sleep-walker about him. It seemed to him he was having some unpleasant dream, and that he was spell-bound by it; that he could hear, and see, and feel, but that all power over himself was denied him.

"Geraldine, here is my friend, Captain Berkeley—Berkeley, allow me to introduce you to my wife."

The eyes of Major and Mrs. La Coste danced with merriment.

"I think Captain Berkeley and I have met before," said the lady in a musical voice, and the music and words of "Kathleen Aroon" sounded afresh in the listener's ears.

"Why should we parted be?"

"Why, indeed!"

"Lawrence, dear, Captain Berkeley was so very kind; he saved my poor little Tiny from being hurt by such a horrid savage dog; I am sure, like myself, you are infinitely obliged to him. Dinner? thanks, the passages are too narrow for taking arms, we just follow the leader; shall I go first, and show the way? See what a lovely centre-piece your exquisite flowers make!" and she waved her delicate white hand towards the bouquet he had left for her, which was in the middle of the well-appointed table, which was laden with beautiful blossoms.

"Lawrence, was it not kind of Captain Berkeley to send me such lovely exotics; and all in exchange for a cluster of common roses; don't you think I had the best of the bargain?"

"Undoubtedly," he laughed, and again their eyes met.

"I do hope I did not splash you much with that horrid hose this afternoon, but how *was* I to know any one was sitting upon the wall? You see the lane is a private road, and no one ever

passes this way, so I couldn't expect you, could I?" and she looked at him quizzically.

"Private!" he faltered, "I beg your pardon; I didn't know."

"Of course not, but you would have been very welcome, as Lawrence's friend, had I been aware of it, I'm sure; and I must make Tiny respect his protector. Lawrence has been a whole week away in London, and left me here alone. Did he tell you?"

"No," answered the captain. "I don't think he did."

He did no justice to the *recherché* little dinner; all he wanted to do was to escape. He knew that he had made a fool of himself, and was well aware that Mrs. La Coste knew it too; and more, that she had told her husband all about it.

"Well, now for your confession, Berkeley," said the major, as he lighted his cigar by that of his friend, and talked between the whiffs. "What is she like? Dark or fair, merry or pensive? Beautiful, of course, or she never would have attracted you."

"There is no 'she' in the case," asserted the other, almost roughly, "and never will be. I thought you wanted to hear all about the old set; there have been a lot of changes, even in this short time."

"And so I do; drive on, Berkeley. I'm settled as a good listener," and he ensconced himself in an Indian lounging chair, looking thoroughly at home.

But the Captain never before was so vague and disjointed, and took his leave as early as he possibly could.

That night he drew up a telegram, and desired it might be sent off at the earliest hour the following morning. It was to his friend Falkner, begging him to bring the yacht to fetch him the same day.

He was waiting upon the seashore with his small portmanteau beside him when the little craft hove in sight, and they sent a boat to the shore to bring him on board.

"Well, old man, and how is the fair inamorata?" laughed his friend, looking at his clouded face.

"She is, like all the rest, a heartless coquette," returned Berkeley savagely.

Captain Falkner gave a long low whistle.

"Does the wind lie that way? Well, old fellow, I was once jilted myself, and I can sympathize with you."

"Jilted," replied the other sharply, "I've not been jilted, I've only been made a fool of. I fell in love with a married woman, and she and her husband enjoyed the joke together; that's all, and so ends my day-dream."

And from that hour Captain Berkeley has never been known to mention the subject.

Captain Falkner learnt the details later on from Major La Coste, who seemed to think the affair rare fun.

A FALSE START.

By HAWLEY SMART,

AUTHOR OF "BREEZIE LANGTON," "BAD TO BEAT," "THE OUTSIDER," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MR. MOLECOMBE GETS UNEASY.

MR. PICK listened to the further evolution of Richard Madingley's scheme with considerable interest, but not altogether with enthusiasm. No man keener than him to turn five hundred pounds into a thousand in a few weeks, and that, he computed, was about the price he ought to receive for his assistance, pecuniarily and otherwise. But then Mr. Pick had a wholesome dread of placing himself within the clutches of the law, and he had a vague idea that the personation of a well-known personage would come under the head of fraud or conspiracy, or something of that sort. Moral scruples the bookmaker had none, still he had escaped once or twice by the skin of his teeth; had indeed once left the dock under the lash of the judge's tongue, and had to listen to the regrets of that functionary that his wrong-doing had been so skilfully planned as to just defeat the administration of justice. No, Mr. Pick did not approve of the bill of fare at Millbank. No, the bookmaker, although he had embarked on some very risky enterprizes in his early career, was too substantial a man now not to weigh possible results, however profitable the game might appear to be, and anything that looked like ending in a law-court he shrank from. He was not quite clear whether the personation of somebody else was not an indictable offence. He rather thought it was, he had hazy ideas of "conspiracy with intent to defraud," being a transgression that carried severe pains and penalties. His mouth watered at the idea of the sum he might demand for his help, but he had no idea of burning his fingers in pulling Dick's chestnuts out of the fire.

"I've been thinking this out," he said slowly, after a silence of some moments, which the other had taken care not to interrupt. "It's rather a risky business, and if I go into it you'll have to pay pretty smartly for my help. I tell you what I'll do. I'll come down and look at it, and that's as much as I'll promise just now. If I fancy the spec, well and good, if not, there's no harm done."

"You will come back with me to-morrow; remember it is important that I should produce the relation from whom I have

expectations as soon as may be. I never saw John Madingley, but you have, and well know the sort of line to take up—country parson with sporting tastes.”

“I can’t personate him to anybody who has ever seen him,” replied Mr. Pick, “but the chances are nobody in Tunnleton ever has. I’ll be ready to-morrow; you wire and order dinner,” and, so saying, the bookmaker rose to his feet and, nodding good-night, left the room.

Could the precious pair have overheard a conversation at Tunnleton, the going down there would have been deemed inexpedient by both of them.

“No, Madingley, I ran up to town and did what you wished, but you had better, at present, let things take their course. At all events there is nothing to be done with your namesake till he returns. They know nothing about this young gentleman at Scotland Yard, and pooh-poohed the whole business. Said that he very likely had a right to the name, and had only exaggerated in claiming relationship with you. In short,” concluded General Shrewster, “they decline to interfere at present in any way, and I suppose they’re right. This fellow would probably declare he only claimed to be a distant connection of yours, and that the rest was merely Tunnleton gossip.”

“Yes,” replied John Madingley, “it is always open to a man to claim that sort of kinship, and he does himself little harm even if the other side disavow it.”

“Yes, a cool hand like this young gentleman will get out of it easily enough. He does not want money apparently, and is certainly not deficient in cheek.”

“I know the sort,” rejoined Madingley laughing, “plenty of bounce and swagger till they’re collared. We’ll leave the fellow alone, and only give Mr. Molecombe a hint in case his daughter’s marriage with my namesake becomes imminent. It will be for him then to discover whether Mr. Richard Madingley is sailing under false colours or not.”

“Yes,” replied Shrewster with a quiet smile, “and it will be a terrible shock to Tunnleton should he turn out to be a rank impostor.”

“Yes,” rejoined the master of Bingwell, “the idea that he has been regularly had rouses the bile of the Yorkshireman, and I don’t suppose the southerners take it more kindly.”

So, it having been settled between them that for the present they would merely watch the course of events, neither John Madingley nor his old friend troubled themselves any more for the present about the doings of this new star that had suddenly risen above the town horizon.

But if they did not trouble themselves about Dick Madingley’s proceedings Tunnleton did; and the Prauns and the Maddoxes and the Torkeslys shook their heads, and agreed that there was

something excessively odd in the newly-engaged man's persistent absence. Mr. Pick had suddenly found that his own legitimate business would detain him some time longer in London, and with the somewhat hazardous game that Richard Madingley was playing he did not consider it advisable to re-appear upon the scene until his pockets were replenished. On that point Mr. Pick was very decided—he would advance no money until, as he expressed it, he had been “to look at the speculation.”

Mrs. Maddox said boldly that the young men had changed a good deal since her time; that if Maddox had treated her in such *nonchalant* fashion after they were engaged he would very soon have “had the mitten.”

Mrs. Praun opined that there was no standing the youth of the present day, they really seemed to expect the young ladies to do all the love-making, to which her irascible husband responded, “And by gad, madam, they are not disappointed,” which produced one of those Mediterranean squalls wont to disturb the even tenor of the Prauns' domestic life—a hot-tempered couple who not only indulged in volcanic explosions at home, but combined in volcanic irruptions abroad, and were a terror and—metaphorically—a very lava-flood to any weak-kneed society they might get into. As for the Maddoxes, they never boiled, but persistently gurgled, like the steady, monotonous wash of the sea against the shore; dangerous in their very persistency in any view they might have taken up. But there was one very curious thing in all this which wrought very much to the *soi-disant* Richard Madingley's advantage. Influenced considerably by their enmity to Maurice Enderby, still further stimulated by the Reverend John Madingley declining to make their acquaintance, the two generals gradually worked themselves into the belief that John Madingley was an impostor.

It's astonishing how it is possible to persuade one's self to a belief in accordance with one's wishes, albeit we have no facts whatever to justify that opinion, and the Maddoxes and the Prauns were not at all people to keep what they thought to themselves. The consequence of all this was, that, far from suspicion falling upon the impostor, there was a lurking misgiving that the Reverend John Madingley was not what he represented himself to be; in the eyes of the Prauns and the Maddoxes a clergyman like Maurice Enderby, who “dabbled in horse-racing,” would be capable of almost anything; they would hardly have hesitated at almost openly insinuating that the whole thing was a fraud but for one fact; there was no getting over that: General Shrewster knew and visited the Reverend Mr. Madingley, and he was not only above suspicion but carried far too many guns to be assailed with impunity; he might have been imposed upon, but it was not likely, nor did even General Praun feel that he should care about hinting *that* to him. Shrewster's social position was beyond

dispute, and he had more than once shown that he could say very bitter things when provoked. Tunnleton had long ago come to the conclusion that Shrewster was a man to be let alone.

But a man who was made wonderfully uneasy by all these varied rumours was Mr. Molecombe. He was pledged to give his daughter to this young man Richard Madingley. Here was his kinsman, from whom, according to his own account, he expected to inherit this Yorkshire property, and that kinsman firmly but politely refused to see Mr. Molecombe; although the banker had written and explained the peculiar relations under which he stood to Richard Madingley, the recluse of Bingwell, although actually residing in Tunnleton, kept his doors resolutely closed upon him. Then these sinister rumours reached his ears that the Rev. John Madingley was an impostor, and this, with the prolonged absence of his son-in-law that was to be, still further increased the banker's uneasiness. It was difficult for him to get—not at the real state of things, but even at what people thought; it was not likely that men like Generals Praun and Maddox would confide their suspicions to him, and a wholesome respect for General Shrewster made them rather shy of expressing their opinion publicly. The banker was much attached to his child, and that he should feel uncomfortable about her engagement was only natural, and there could be no doubt about it, that just at present Mr. Richard Madingley's real *status* was under suspicion. General Shrewster was the only man behind the scenes, for John Madingley had not even confided to the Enderbys that he knew nothing whatever of this young gentleman who had thought proper to claim kinship with him. Shrewster was, what he would have termed, watching the match with great interest. "Madingley's quite right," he would mutter to himself, "in waiting for this impostor to show his hand; unless he has heard of John Madingley's arrival, and got scared, he is bound to make the first move, and then it will be a case of checkmate almost immediately. The Scotland Yard people are right; we must allow this young gentleman a little more rope in order to make his discomfiture a certainty. However, if he should come back to Tunnleton there will be no doubt about that, and in any case it is clearly John Madingley's duty to interfere, and prevent Edith Molecombe being married to this man."

Mr. Pick's business being at length brought to a conclusion, it was settled that he should run down to Tunnleton that evening in the assumed character of Dick's uncle, and see what he thought of things. Madingley at once telegraphed to his servants to have dinner and a spare bed made ready, and a little before six he and Mr. Pick settled themselves comfortably in a first-class carriage and started for their destination.

There was only one other passenger, and he was apparently absorbed in his cigar and evening paper. Dick cast one long keen

glance at him, and then, coming to the conclusion that he had never seen the stranger before, began conversing in a desultory way about the past Ascot and Goodwood. Bob Grafton, for he was the stranger, pricked up his ears, as he always did when the talk ran in that groove, but refrained from joining in it. Suddenly he became haunted with the idea that he had met the elder of his companions before, and yet for the life of him he could not recollect where or who he was. The man was like a dim shadow of the past connected in Grafton's mind with some unpleasant incident. Ever and anon he stole furtive glances over his paper at Mr. Pick, but it was of no use; the bookmaker was to him like the blurred photograph of some one he had known, but now failed to recognize.

On arrival at Tunnleton Bob got out, for he was on his way to Bridge Court, and purposed taking a fly from the station to convey him thither. Rather to his astonishment his fellow-travellers followed his example, and as they drove off Grafton asked the porter, who was busied with his luggage, whether he knew them.

"The young un's Mr. Madingley, sir, but I never saw the other gentleman before."

"Madingley!" exclaimed Grafton, as he jumped into his fly. "I have it—that's the fellow who found out John Madingley's mare was lame at Epsom, and got such a lot of money out of her for the Oaks—Pick, the bookmaker, and if all that was said about it was true, nobody was more likely to have early information inasmuch as he was accused of causing it. What can have brought that precious scoundrel to Tunnleton?"

"All right, Phillips; here we are," said Dick Madingley, as his well-trained servant opened the door the moment the fly stopped. Take my uncle's things up to his room; dinner in a quarter of an hour; and where have you put my letters?"

"You will find them on the mantelpiece in the drawing-room, sir," and as he spoke Dick fancied Mr. Phillips eyed Mr. Pick with no little surprise and curiosity. But apparently the man saw he was observed, for he turned hastily away and disappeared to attend to his duties.

"All fancy, I suppose," muttered Dick; "there's nothing remarkable in my having an uncle. Most people have till stricken in years, and yet somehow that beggar Phillips struck me as looking astonished. Now for my letters: hum, small tradesmen's accounts, a tea at the Torkeslys, will I join a house-dinner at the club, an invitation or two for garden-parties, and, hum! a note from my papa-in-law as is to be. 'Will I call as soon as I return? is most anxious to see me on a matter of great importance.' Now what maggot has he got in his head? However, I don't mean to see him to-night, to-morrow will do for him. Dinner and a bottle of wine's the first thing, anyway."

During dinner young Madingley kept up the farce and was extremely civil to his apocryphal uncle. Phillips's face gave no sign, though nothing escaped his keen eyes, and some of Mr. Pick's *gaucheries* might have put a less thoroughly trained servant off his balance; that gentleman, indeed, was not above harpooning anything he fancied with his own fork, and utterly ignored salt-spoons while his knife was in his hand, plunging the blade in freely when wanting that condiment. The meal over, and Mr. Pick having pronounced it a very pretty notion of a feed, the bookmaker settled down to a cigar and brandy and water. Champagne he understood, but the best of claret had no attractions for him.

"Look here, old man," said Dick, "you've got all you want in the way of tobacco, &c., and there's books of all sorts on those shelves. I just want to slip down to the club for an hour, and hear what's been going on while I was away. Necessary, you see, in the rather ticklish game I'm playing to have the gossip of the place at my finger-ends."

"Quite right. Don't you mind me. I've a shrewd suspicion you're out of your depth already. You can't keep too close an eye on the current. Let it once turn against you, and the sooner you slope the better."

"You're right. Shall see you when I come back;" and, with a nod to his friend, Dick took up his hat and sallied out into the night-air.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE GAME ABOUT UP.

MR. PICK, left to his own reflections, began in his parlance to reckon up the trumps in their hand. "Yes, this sort of crib and turn-out looks like money, and as for Dick's name he's always gone under that of Madingley, and that he's no relation to old John is no fault of his. He's quite willing to belong to the family *if* they'll let him. It was a very good plant to come down here and look out for a wife with money, and, according to Dick, it looks like coming off if he can carry on a little longer. But there's one very awkward corner to get round. These swells always go in for what they call settlements—means, I suppose, putting down your picture cards and showing what money you've got and where you keep it. Now Dick must come to grief over that. He's only one chance, to run away with the girl and trust to the old man coming round afterwards. It's a risky game, and I shall charge pretty high for what I put into it."

Then Mr. Pick selected a novel from the book-case and sat down to enjoy for the twentieth time the account of the great "Oriël" trial in Digby Grand; for, like most men, Mr. Pick enjoyed the

description of life and scenes within his own immediate experience. But he had not been reading long when the opening of the house-door announced the return of Dick Madingley.

"It's all U P," exclaimed that worthy; "and the sooner you clear out of Tunnleton the better."

"Why, what has happened?" inquired Mr. Pick.

"John Madingley is here, and has been for the last week. All Tunnleton knows it."

"Whew!" whistled Mr. Pick. "Yes, you're right—you are knocked out of time. Now the next thing is to get out as easy as we can."

"I don't know about *easy*," replied Dick. "I should think we had better get out as quick as we can."

"Now, look here, young man," replied Mr. Pick impressively; "you can't be said to have my experience of tight places, and there's many an awkward circumstance in a man's career may be got over if he'll only just *brass it out*; now, I have no intention of putting myself in a bustle, I can tell you."

"Why, good gracious!" exclaimed Dick; "you come down here as John Madingley, and here's the very man himself in the town—what the deuce are you thinking of?"

"Never mind what I came down for; no one has heard you call me anything but 'uncle' as yet. Can't you have an uncle on your mother's side as well as your father's? Bless you, my boy, I'm your Uncle Popkins, or anything else you like to call me—bar Madingley—as for that 'uncle,' you must stick to it that they misunderstood you."

"But you don't suppose that will satisfy old Molecombe, do you?" replied Dick.

"No; nor that you will marry his daughter," retorted the book-maker.

"I don't know about that," replied Dick doggedly. "If I am not mistaken, Edith is really fond of me, and when that is the case a girl don't throw you over just because her father says 'no.'"

"Ah! then you *do* think that probable?"

"Never had a doubt about it," rejoined Dick sententiously; "when it came to the settlements it was hardly likely that any hankey-pankey work you or I could manage would blind a man of business like Molecombe. No, I'll take your advice, and play the game out. I shall have to see Molecombe to-morrow, and no doubt get my dismissal when I disclaim all connection with John Madingley."

"Good," said Mr. Pick sententiously; "it comes exactly to what I reckoned it up at when you were out. Run away with the girl, if you can, and trust to the stony-hearted father relenting afterwards. I don't mean putting much money into the business, I tell you, but I'll stay with you a week, and find you enough to carry on for a month on the old terms; if it don't come off in that

time, you had better give it up. And now, my boy, I'm off to bed." And so saying, Mr. Pick lit his bedroom candle, and nodded good-night to his companion.

Dick Madingley sat lost in thought for some few minutes after the bookmaker's departure. He possessed considerable experience of how far an off-hand manner, unlimited assurance, and the possession of ready money will impose upon society. He was utterly unprincipled, and had for some time come to the conclusion that his first stepping-stone to fortune was to marry money. He liked Edith Molecombe, but, nice-looking girl though she was, he, nevertheless, was no whit in love with her. The question was, whether the speculation was good enough. The banker must have money, and, storm and rave though he might at the outset, yet when the thing was irrevocable he could not but forgive his only child. As for his past, Dick thought there would be not much trouble in burying that. It would be easy to ignore his present situation, and one or two of like character which he had previously held. Fool! as if the irrevocable past was not always dogging man's footsteps, and, obscure as his career may have been, rising up against him in the days of his splendour. It is no use; a man who knew you when you kept that grocery store in Islington confronts you sooner or later, when you soar to the glories of Cromwell Road.

However, this never crossed Dick's brain. He saw no further, and it was very possible to persuade Edith Molecombe to trust herself to him, and that, once married, her father's forgiveness would be a mere matter of time; and, with a firm determination to pursue his love-suit to the bitter end, Mr. Madingley followed his friend's example.

The next morning Dick, strongly advised by Mr. Pick, determined to take the bull by the horns, and, to use that worthy's expression, "have it out with his guv'nor-in-law" at once.

"Now, you know what you've got to say," said Mr. Pick. "Say it, say it strong, and then come the indignant dodge. Kicked out you'll be; that'll be the end of the first move. If the young woman means sticking to you, you'll know all about it before the week's out. Now then, off you go, and leave me to explore the beauties of Tunnleton."

Dick Madingley was blessed with plenty of nerve, and it was with the most unblushing effrontery that he knocked at the banker's door and requested to see Mr. Molecombe.

He was informed that gentleman was out, upon which Dick expressed great annoyance, and, making his way to the drawing-room, told the servant to let Miss Molecombe know that he was waiting to see her. This request the man very naturally complied with, and, having shown Mr. Madingley into the empty drawing-room, went off at once in quest of his young mistress.

A very few minutes, and then the door opened and Edith Molecombe sprang forward to greet her lover.

"Oh, Dick!" she exclaimed, "what a long time you have been away from me."

"Soothing to my vanity to think you have found it so," he replied, "but I could not get away before; business arrangements consequent on our marriage detained me; and you know, dearest, how slow lawyers are about these sort of things. But, sit down, Edith, I want to have a little serious talk with you."

"Yes," replied the girl, as she seated herself on the sofa. "You haven't bad news to tell me, have you, Dick?"

"No, nothing very bad, though I must own I'm not a little annoyed; but if you really care for me and will stick to me, I shan't so much mind."

"Why you know I will, Dick. Have not I promised?" she continued, almost in a whisper, "and do you think I'd go back from that promise?"

"No, I think I can trust you," he replied; "but during my absence a very awkward misunderstanding has arisen, it seems. Mr. John Madingley—a well-known man up in Yorkshire—has taken up his abode in Tunnleton. Because his name happens to be the same as mine, and because I rather foolishly bragged of how good an uncle of mine was to me, and what great expectations I had from him, I find all the people here have jumped to the conclusion that this Mr. John Madingley is that uncle."

"We certainly all thought you had said so, and I think papa has called twice on him. It seems he is a great invalid and sees nobody, with the exception of General Shrewster and the Enderbys."

Dick gave a slight start. "Odd!" he muttered. "Old Shrewster and that prig of a parson are the two people in Tunnleton I dislike most."

"Well, Edith," he continued aloud, "how the misunderstanding arose I don't know—I certainly never meant to say that Mr. John Madingley was my uncle. A very distant connection, no doubt he is, but the uncle to whom I owe everything is staying with me now, and rejoices in the more commonplace name of Dobson."

Edith Molecombe said nothing for two or three minutes. She felt quite certain that Dick had, upon more than one occasion, said positively that John Madingley, of Bingwell, Yorkshire, was his uncle. She knew her lover was lying, but then he was her lover, so she deliberately shut her eyes to the truth and determined to believe that she was mistaken.

"I don't see much to be disturbed about in all this. You will, of course, have to explain it to papa."

"Exactly what I had hoped to do this morning," he replied quickly; "I only heard of the rumour late last night, and came up this morning both to see you and to set your father right on this point."

"Papa may feel a little annoyed at having fallen into a mistake

—most people are—but I don't know that it is one of very great consequence."

"Ah! Edith—Edith darling. Can't you see," exclaimed Dick with well simulated passion, "that your father gave you to me under the misapprehension that I was heir to a nice estate in Yorkshire? When he finds that I only expect to inherit a more moderate income, and that my uncle, though as dear an old fellow as ever stepped, can lay claim to no particular family, I am afraid he will revoke his consent. Can I depend on you, Edith, not to give me up then, but to stand firm, and wait till time shall soften his disappointment?"

"Yes," she replied in clear resolute tones, "I promised myself to you because I loved you—of course we can't marry without something to live upon; but you won't find me grumble if we are not quite so rich as was expected."

"Thanks, my own brave girl," he replied, as he bent down and kissed her, "now I feel I can trust implicitly in you, I have no fears for the result, although I shall doubtless have to go through a stern probation as best I may. And now I am sure you will agree with me that the sooner I see your father and put a stop to this absurd rumour generally, the better."

"Yes," said Miss Molecombe, "it will be best so. I don't think you do papa quite justice. He may feel a little disappointed, just at first, but he is not the man to go back from his word on such slight grounds as those."

"You have taken quite a load off my breast; and now I must be off;" and, after again embracing his *fiancée*, Dick Madingley took his departure.

"Not a bad morning's work," he mused, as he strolled leisurely back to Tunnleton, for the banker's house, be it remembered, stood a little way outside the town. "If Edith only sticks to me, and I think she will, old Molecombe will have to give in at last. It wouldn't do to talk to her about running away just yet, but when I am presented with 'the key of the street' I shall be able to harangue on domestic tyranny, and point out that there is a period when parental oppression justifies daughters taking their lives into their own hands. It won't take very long to arrive at that stage, either."

Could Dick have been present at a little conversation in John Madingley's rooms, he would have realized that his next interview with Mr. Molecombe would probably be his last.

"I think," said General Shrewster, "it's time now, Madingley, for you to interfere. I hear this precious namesake of yours returned last night, and you really are in common justice bound to let Molecombe know that he is no relation of yours."

"I'm not quite clear I'm called upon to interfere at all in the matter; Mr. Molecombe has thought proper to identify himself with the faction here that are apparently endeavouring to make Tunnleton impossible for Maurice and his wife to live in."

"I don't think that has anything to do with it," interrupted Maurice. "I can't altogether blame Mr. Molecombe because he has thought fit to credit malicious charges brought against me; but surely, sir, it is your duty to unmask this young scoundrel, and save Miss Molecombe from such a terrible fate as her marriage with him would be."

"You go a little too fast," replied John Madingley quietly. "Just bear in mind, that, whatever we may think, all we know positively is that he is no nephew of mine."

"Perfectly true," remarked Shrewster, "but I agree with Enderby, that it is only right you should let Molecombe know that fact at once."

Thus urged, John Madingley sat down and wrote a brief note to the banker, in which he said, "that, it having come to his ears that a certain Mr. Richard Madingley, whom he understood was engaged to be married to Miss Molecombe, had stated that he was nephew and heir to him (John Madingley), he begged to inform Mr. Molecombe that the gentleman in question was no relation, and that he had never heard of his existence until he himself arrived in Tunnleton some three weeks ago."

"There," he said, "I think that meets the case; anyhow it is all I virtually know of the matter, and Mr. Molecombe must do as he thinks best on that knowledge."

"Oh! that will be quite sufficient," cried Maurice. "No father could dream of giving his daughter to a man capable of uttering such a gross falsehood as that."

"I hope you're right, Mr. Enderby," said General Shrewster, "but, mark my words, he is a precious cunning, plausible young gentleman, and I should not be the least surprised if he carried off Miss Molecombe after all. If he is the arrant adventurer I suspect him to be, Edith Molecombe's money is her great attraction in his eyes. And the tenacity with which men of this class cling to a purpose of this sort is marvellous," and then the general took up his hat and departed.

CHAPTER XXVI.

FAMILY JARS.

ALTHOUGH Dick Madingley had failed to see Mr. Molecombe he was not left long in ignorance of that gentleman's decision; indeed, in the course of the day he received two notes from the banker; the first merely requested him to call the next morning on a matter of considerable importance, the second informed him that there would be no necessity to do so: that he, Mr. Molecombe, had received a communication from the Reverend John Madingley not only entirely repudiating him as a nephew, but disowning any relationship with him whatever. "As," continued the banker,

"you have persistently and distinctly always referred me to your uncle, I need scarcely say that my whole belief in your account of yourself is shaken, and you cannot be surprised at my refusing to consent to any engagement between my daughter and a man about whose antecedents I know nothing, further than that he has represented himself to me as the acknowledged heir of a gentleman who had never even heard of him until about a fortnight ago. You will therefore understand that your engagement to my daughter is at an end, as also is our acquaintance," and then the banker wound up formally with, he had "the honour to be, &c."

But Dick Madingley was not going to take his dismissal quietly. He replied to Mr. Molecombe's letter, and repeated the same specious story of a misunderstanding that he had detailed to Edith, pointed out that the uncle from whom he really had expectations, and to whom he owed everything, was now staying with him, and that if Mr. Molecombe would only consent to be introduced to Mr. Dobson he would see how the mistake arose.

But the banker's reply was very short and uncompromising; he briefly pointed out that Richard Madingley had several times deliberately stated that John Madingley was his uncle, a fact which that gentleman emphatically denied. He could not refuse to believe the latter on this point, and therefore had no alternative but to regard Mr. Richard Madingley as having wilfully misrepresented his social position, and therefore begged to decline any further intercourse with him.

"Kicked out," said Dick meditatively, as he handed the letter to his Mentor; "well, I expected that."

"Just so," replied Mr. Pick; "well, if old Molecombe won't let you in at the front door there's nothing for it but the young lady should steal out at the back. Yes, Master Dick, if you press the siege hard enough you ought to persuade her to make a bolt of it before a fortnight is out. However, I shan't be able to give you much more of my society; I have had my holiday and must be off to York races on Monday."

It was evident to the precious pair that Mr. Pick could be of no further assistance in the prosecution of this sordid love-suit; that was for Dick to pursue alone. As has been before said, he was of a bitter and vindictive nature, and he felt that it would afford him much satisfaction to laugh at the banker's beard by carrying off his daughter in the face of the curt dismissal he had received, and the fates were fighting for him in a way which, though commonplace, would not have happened in the case of a more judicious man than Mr. Molecombe. It was a sore blow to the banker's pride to think that all Tunnton would be talking of his daughter's engagement with one whom he felt little doubt now was a mere specious adventurer, and he was foolish enough to visit his annoyance upon Edith. He delighted in painting Dick Madingley's conduct in the blackest terms. His daughter stood up

for her lover with much spirit; she had determined to believe Dick's own version of the story, and shut her eyes to what she knew to be the real state of the case. She was very much in love, and what girl under those circumstances would not stand up for her lover, let his wrong-doing be what it might?

There was much stormy converse with the twain upon this point, with the usual result, that Edith believed more strongly in her lover than ever.

To open a clandestine correspondence with Miss Molecombe was easy work for Dick, who was personally acquainted with all the dependants of the establishment, and the female servant who would not assist in the promotion of a love affair, more especially when liberally handselled, is rarely met with. Dick's passionate notes quickly found their way to their destination, and that they contained entreaties for a rendezvous need scarcely be mentioned. There were plenty of secluded walks around Tunnleton, and in these long summer afternoons there was no one to know of Edith Molecombe's coming and going. The awkward disappointment gave her an excuse for rather holding aloof from Tunnleton society for the present, and so day after day she wandered through the fields and woods with her scapegrace lover. The strong common sense that she naturally possessed would whisper to her now and then that Dick's love-tale was hardly veracious, but the glamour of her passion closed her eyes, and if she could not quite believe that it was all misunderstanding, and that he had never represented himself as the nephew of John Madingley, yet she deemed the falsehood had been perpetrated because of the great love Dick bore her.

"Even supposing," he would argue, "that I had said so, which I deny, when a fellow cares about a girl, and is just wild to call her his own, it's no great crime if he a little bounces about his position to her relations in order to carry his point. A man who is a man don't stick at trifles when he's over head and ears in love with a girl, and I don't think, Edith, I should stand at much to win you," and Miss Molecombe in her infatuation thought Richard Madingley one of the most chivalrous of men, and failed to discern the utter selfishness of his character. "Your father," continued Dick, "is behaving like a parent of the last century; he has no business to treat you in the way he is doing; it is shameful that he should play the tyrant in this bygone fashion; remember you are of age, and no parent can dictate to you on a matter of this kind."

"Oh! Dick," she cried; "I am always standing up for you; I have told papa again and again that I will not sit by and hear you abused, and I intend to stand to my promise, and will marry nobody but you."

"You are a dear, good girl," he replied, "and if your father cannot be brought to listen to reason we shall have to take the

law into our own hands. I want you for yourself, darling, and not merely because your father can make you a handsome allowance if he chooses."

"I don't quite understand you, Dick, but I couldn't marry you without papa's consent, I couldn't indeed! I will be true to you, but we must wait; he will come round in time."

"By all means," rejoined Dick, "give him time, though it is hardly fair to expect us to waste our lives because he happened to misunderstand what I said—but never mind, darling, I know you're true as steel, and as long as that is the case I will bear this injustice as best I may."

It was ingeniously put; Dick Madingley was posing before his *fiancée* as the victim of cruel injustice. He drew her closer to him, and as they strolled leisurely down a briar-scented lane a more loverlike couple could scarcely have been seen; and this was precisely the view that a tall muscular young man, who had just reached a stile leading into the lane some thirty or forty yards behind them, took of affairs.

Maurice Enderby, for it was he, paused ere he mounted the stile. He recognized the couple before him at a glance, and had no wish to intrude upon them, but he felt sorely puzzled as to what he ought to do under the circumstances. He knew, as did all Tunnleton, by this time, that Mr. Molecombe had withdrawn his consent to Edith's marriage; he believed, as did many other people, that Richard Madingley was an impostor; still it was perfectly clear that Miss Molecombe had not given him up and did not share that opinion. Maurice Enderby sat for some time on that stile thinking what he should do. It did not require much knowledge of the world to know how clandestine meetings with an unprincipled scamp like Dick Madingley would terminate. He could not bear the idea of any girl becoming the prey of a reckless adventurer such as Dick. He could not stand still and see Edith Molecombe, in a moment of madness, consign herself to life-long misery. But how was he to interfere? It was a very delicate matter to touch upon. He might communicate his discovery to Mr. Molecombe, and throw that gentleman into a perfect tempest of indignation, but it struck Maurice that would be more likely to precipitate an elopement than avert it. In vain did Maurice cudgel his brains; he could think of no other means of interfering except through the medium of Edith's father, and he felt instinctively that would produce more harm than good. In the meantime the lovers had got well out of sight, and he could now pursue his way home. Maurice felt that he should very much like to take counsel with somebody as to what he had best do—but with whom? Most decidedly he did not wish his discovery blazoned abroad. Should he confide the matter to General Shrewster, and take his advice on the subject? He was a clear-headed man and not given to babble; however, he was not

destined to require the general's services upon this occasion; for, to his great delight, on arriving at his own house, he found Bob Grafton chatting merrily over the tea-table with Mrs. Enderby, and it flashed across him that a thorough man of the world like Grafton was just the very man to take into his confidence.

Grafton was in high spirits; news and gossip of every kind fell from his lips. He touched on pretty well everything that was talked about—musically, politically, socially, and wound up by congratulating Mrs. Enderby with mock gravity upon her successful *début* as an owner of race-horses. Bessie's face became serious directly.

"Don't jest about that, please, Mr. Grafton. There is no denying we have been very fortunate, and that the money has been a great boon to us; but I can't help feeling that it is an ill-omened present, as we shall discover in the end."

"Nonsense, Mrs. Enderby! There can be no harm in what you do; indeed, as a matter of fact you don't win it; you've the luck to possess a jolly old uncle who gives you half *his* winnings, which he can well afford to do. I only wish I had an uncle so charged with right feeling. And now I must say good-bye; it's a good stretch back to Bridge Court."

"I'll walk part of the way with you, Bob," said Maurice, as he took up his hat, and the pair descended the stairs together. "I want your advice on a rather ticklish point," he continued, when they found themselves outside the door. And then Maurice told the whole story of Dick Madingley's arrival in Tunnleton, how he had proclaimed himself nephew and heir of John Madingley, had become engaged to a young lady of the place, and how that when John Madingley himself appeared on the scene he had utterly repudiated all knowledge of his namesake.

Grafton listened with great attention and no little amusement. "What a precious young scamp!" he exclaimed, as Maurice finished, "and by Jove! what a sell for him John Madingley turning up at the finish! However, of course that burst him up, and his matrimonial speculation is all over now."

"That is just what it isn't," rejoined Maurice. "Molecombe broke off his daughter's engagement, and turned this young gentleman out of the house with the utmost promptitude. But the fellow still lingers in the place, as I happened to discover to-day, and is still making clandestine love to Miss Molecombe. Now this is what I want to consult you about. I don't wish to meddle, I don't desire to make a scandal. If I inform her father——"

"Oh, nonsense!" interrupted Bob energetically; "from your description of him, he would lock her up, and then she would be off before twenty-four hours were over her head. No, there's only one way out of a thing like this. We must deal with Dick Madingley. We must either bounce him out of Tunnleton, or buy him, but I think we can manage to do the former. You

must know that when I came down the beginning of the week my attention was attracted by one of my two fellow-travellers. The man's face haunted me. I knew I had seen it before, and under unpleasant circumstances. Rather to my surprise, they both got out at Tunnleton, and the porter told me that the younger man of the two was Mr. Richard Madingley. The name brought it all back to me. I recollected my man then. It was a Mr. Pick, a leg who was strongly suspected of being actively engaged in the laming of a horse of John Madingley's at Epsom. Like most of these cases, it couldn't be proved, but of one thing there was no doubt, that nobody benefited by that mare's accident so largely as Mr. Pick, and from the heavy amount he had betted against her it seemed as if he had foreseen the accident that befell her at the eleventh hour."

"Still, although that is very corroborative of the opinion I have formed of Dick Madingley, I don't see how that is going to help us."

"It's not at all a bad card, my dear Maurice, in the game of bounce that we are about to play; that this young gentleman should be entertaining such a known scoundrel as Pick speaks volumes against him; besides, didn't you tell me that he swaggered a good deal about an uncle who is staying with him whom he asserted to be the uncle who owned the gold-mine, or whatever he chose to call it. Now I take it half Tunnleton could tell you who has been staying with Mr. Richard Madingley this week, and if it turns out, as I think it quite likely it may do, that this thief Pick, the bookmaker, has been posing as that wealthy relative, then, my boy, we've got the ace of trumps in our hand, and now good-bye. I'll be with you to lunch to-morrow, and we'll snuff our young friend out as soon as we have made the necessary inquiries."

CHAPTER XXVII.

NOTICE TO QUIT.

THE morrow was rather an eventful day with Maurice Enderby. In the first place John Madingley took his departure; he was extremely cordial in his farewell both to Bessie and her husband. "I'll give you what help I can, my lad," he said as he bade Maurice good-bye, "in whatever you turn your hand to; but you're no more fit to be a parson than I was, though when they come to tot up my ledger they'll find I've been a good deal better clergyman than they give me credit for; but remember, things were very different when I began, and what was thought no harm in a parson doing in my younger days is looked upon in quite another light now. You're in the wrong groove, my boy; take an old man's advice, think very seriously before you are ordained priest, and remember if you want a little money to start in another line I dare say I can manage to find it for you." A warm kiss to Bessie, a hearty wrench of the

hand to Maurice Enderby, and old John Madingley was speeding once more towards his northern home.

"I hope you've a decent lunch for Grafton," said Maurice to his wife, as they strolled home from the station.

"Don't throw doubts upon my housekeeping," replied Bessie laughing, "the fatted calf has been killed for Mr. Grafton, and I don't think you'll have anything to complain of."

Bob Grafton turned up in due course, and did due justice to Mrs. Enderby's preparations; but no sooner was their meal disposed of, and they were left by Bessie to their own devices, than he at once plunged into the midst of things.

"I've asked a question here and there about Tunnleton this morning, and gathered a fact or two that will be useful to us. Only one person has stayed with Richard Madingley since he established himself here, that was his uncle, Mr. Dobson, who left again some two or three mornings ago. I've no earthly doubt that Mr. Pick and Mr. Dobson are identical, though what object Mr. Pick had in posing as this young man's uncle I don't know. I can imagine a score of good reasons for his changing his name. He may be veritably his uncle for all I know, but we've this fact to go upon, his relative is well known as a thoroughly unscrupulous book-maker, and is masquerading down here under an assumed name. The conclusion is obvious; he is known to have given utterance to a most mendacious statement regarding his kinship to John Madingley. You have fair grounds, therefore, for supposing that he is also down here under false colours. And now comes the question of how are we to put the screw on. What I propose is this, that you and I walk down to see him, tell him briefly, but sternly, that we give him forty-eight hours to clear out of Tunnleton, and that if he has not disappeared in that time you will feel it your duty to lay the facts that have come to your knowledge before the committee of the club."

"And suppose," replied Maurice, "he simply laughs at us, and tells us to do our worst?"

"Then hold your tongue and let me talk to him. You see, if what we know really *was* put before a committee of the club, they would feel bound to make him substantiate his social position. What scoundrels he may choose to know is no business of theirs, but doubts having arisen they have a right to insist upon his vindicating himself and show them that he is a gentleman and not a mere adventurer who has crept into their midst under false colours."

"And you think it possible, Bob, to keep Miss Molecombe's name out of the business altogether?"

"No, honestly, I don't; we will do our best; but an unprincipled blackguard like that is pretty certain to introduce it, even if he gives in and we carry our point; he is sure to spit all the venom he can; and look here, Maurice, you used to be able to hit terribly hard with the gloves when you were a freshman, and probably will

be sorely tempted to knock Mr. Richard Madingley down before our interview is over. Mind, you must keep your temper. And now, the sooner we tackle this gentleman in his own den the better."

Mr. Richard Madingley, having made an excellent luncheon, was ruminating how things stood with him in Tunnleton. He was quite conscious that they were beginning to look askew at him at the club. They had no doubt there about his having represented himself to be John Madingley's nephew, and they were equally aware from General Shrewster that John Madingley had most clearly denied all relationship during his brief visit to Tunnleton. People who had opened their houses freely to Dick Madingley began now to repent their precipitation. Some few crusty old members, who had not benefited by Dick's hospitality, were already whispering that "the fellow ought never to have been let in here, the committee are not half particular enough in their scrutiny." Let people once conceive a suspicion that you have deceived them, and that you are not what you represented yourself to be, and it is wonderful how willing they are to go into the other extreme, and believe any wild story to your detriment.

Dick felt that opinion was against him in Tunnleton. He could not but notice that many of his fair acquaintances, who had previously quite courted a bow from him, now seemed a little anxious to avoid meeting him, and when they did the old smiling salute degenerated into a frigid bend.

"Yes," he mused, "the game's about up here; well, it has served my turn very well, and I don't know that even the finish of it is not another trick in my favour! The question of settlements would have been a rock I must have split upon; my only chance would have been to run away with Edith, and old Molecombe's angry breaking-off of our engagement only makes it easier to win her consent to that step. A few days more, and I've no doubt I shall get her to agree to it." But here Dick Madingley's reflections were somewhat rudely interrupted by an intimation from Phillips that Mr. Enderby wished to see him.

"Mr. Enderby!" exclaimed Dick in great astonishment.

"Yes, sir," replied Phillips; "he and another gentleman, I don't know his name, but he's often about Tunnleton, I believe; stops a good deal at Bridge Court, sir."

"Show them up to the drawing-room, Phillips, and say I'll be with them in two or three minutes. Enderby," he muttered, "now what can he want with me? I hate him and don't suppose he has much liking for me. What can he have got to say to me? As for the story about John Madingley, why all the town knows it by this time, he can't have come with that precious discovery to me. And I don't think," said Dick meditatively, "he can possibly have found out anything else; however, here goes."

When Dick entered the drawing-room, Maurice Enderby saluted him with a formal bow, introduced the stranger who accompanied

him as his friend Mr. Grafton, and then, without further preface he continued:

"I need scarcely say, Mr. Madingley, that nothing but a matter of urgent importance would have justified this intrusion, but if you will only listen to me patiently for a few minutes I will endeavour to be as brief as possible over a most unpleasant business," and then, in pithy logical sequence, Maurice stated the facts with which we are already acquainted, and concluded by saying that all these things threw such grave doubts on the minds of both himself and his friend that he had no alternative but to make them public.

"And do you suppose, Mr. Enderby, that I feel called upon to inform you of all the details of my family history, of where I usually live, who are my intimate acquaintances, &c."

"No," replied Maurice, "that will be for the information of the club committee, and, as for family details, I can only trust that you will be rather more fortunate as regards uncles than you have been so far."

The shot told. A savage scowl passed across Dick Madingley's face, and he muttered something, of which "meddlesome parsons" was all that was audible. Bob Grafton, who had watched him keenly from the beginning of Maurice's statement, had noted, coolly though Dick took it, his slight start at the mention of Mr. Pick; he also noted the slightly nervous twitch with which he heard the threat of placing his case before the club committee. "That fellow will shut up when the pinch comes," thought Grafton.

"I have very little doubt, Mr. Enderby," rejoined Dick, with a sneer, "you are intimately acquainted with the members of the betting ring. It is not often that any gentleman manifests your interest in turf matters who is not in the habit of doing business with that fraternity. I am not aware that you ever saw my Uncle Dobson, but, even if you did, an accidental likeness to an unknown betting man hardly warrants the assertion that he is a supposititious relation."

Maurice hesitated for a moment, but Grafton now cut into the conversation in quiet resolute fashion that somewhat awed Dick Madingley.

"Oh, no!" he said, "we don't make mistakes of that kind. I'm a racing man myself, and have known Mr. Pick by sight ever since he nobbled Marietta for the Oaks seven years ago. I travelled down from London in the same carriage with you and him ten days ago, and know perfectly well he passed in Tunnleton as your Uncle Dobson. Never had anybody else staying with you, you know, since you've been in Tunnleton. Can't be any mistake about it, you see."

"And what the devil have you got to do with it, I should like to know?" demanded Dick fiercely. "By what right do you interfere?"

"Right!" exclaimed Grafton, with a short laugh. "By the right that men put welshers out of the inclosure of the race-course, by the right that all men have to defend their brethren from

fraud, by the acknowledged right and duty of every man to expose a swindler!"

"And you dare say this to me!" cried Dick, with a voice hoarse with passion.

"Yes," chimed in Maurice, "we not only say it, but, as Grafton says, it's our duty to say it. For the sake of some of those who have weakly trusted you, who have weakly welcomed you to their homes, and to whom this exposure must be a source of bitter shame, we are willing to hush it up as far as may be. Give us your word to leave Tunnleton within eight-and-forty hours, and we will stay our hands for that time; but after that remember everything we know is laid before the club committee, and your exposure is imminent."

"You may do as you like about that," rejoined Madingley, "I am quite willing to court investigation, and shall bring an action for libel against the pair of you to boot."

"No, you won't," chimed in Grafton, "we are not going to be frightened by brag, and you don't mean fighting. You'll be out of Tunnleton in forty-eight hours."

"Do you know, sir," rejoined Dick, with inimitable assurance, "that I am engaged to be married to Miss Molecombe, and that——"

"Her father kicked you out of the house a few days ago. Yes, we know all about that, and it is to avoid such annoyances as this that we suggest that you should leave Tunnleton quietly and at once—but leave Tunnleton you will, or find yourself cut by the whole community."

For a few minutes Dick reflected in dogged silence, then he said:

"Remember, I in no wise acknowledge that the allegations you make against me are true, although perhaps there is just that suspicion of truth in them that makes them difficult to disprove; but, gentlemen, my feelings are deeply involved as regards Miss Molecombe, and I utterly decline to leave Tunnleton for another week."

"Ha! in order that you may continue your clandestine meetings with that foolish girl," interposed Maurice hotly. "No, Mr. Madingley; forty-eight hours is the outside we give you, and I honestly believe that is twenty-four too long."

Dick looked at him for a moment.

"I suppose," he said with an evil sneer, "that in the interests of morality you consider it necessary to keep strict espionage over your flock. I have heard of such shepherds, but never saw one of the dirty creatures before. You have been doing me the honour, I presume, of dogging my footsteps lately."

For an instant Maurice's fist clenched, his eyes flashed, the veins in his forehead stood out, and it was the veriest toss-up whether Dick Madingley measured his length on the carpet or

not; but a "Steady, old man!" from Grafton turned the scale, and with a mighty effort Maurice mastered his temper.

"I happened to see you walking with Miss Molecombe yesterday, and knowing, as indeed all Tunnleton knows, that her father had forbidden all intercourse between you, I don't scruple to say that such conduct on your part will make gossip all too busy with her name."

"Never mind going into all that," broke in Grafton, "it is quite beside the point. Mr. Madingley thoroughly understands us—we give him forty-eight hours to leave the place quietly. After that, we do our best to unmask an adventurer. No; you needn't talk about libel—we'll chance that. Come along, Maurice, I don't think we need detain Mr. Madingley any longer; he quite understands us."

"I shall take my own course," blustered Dick.

"Just so," rejoined Grafton; "which will be a ticket to London by an early train to-morrow. Good morning."

Dick Madingley vouchsafed not the slightest notice of their salutation, and, when the pair were outside the house, Maurice exclaimed:

"Thank heaven we are through with that. I never was so sorely tempted to inflict personal chastisement as I was a few minutes ago."

"No, I know, old man; but it would have weakened our game terribly, and a summons for assault is always an awkward thing for one of your profession. He's going right enough, never fear; but you were right in one thing: we ought not to have given him more than twenty-four hours; he's a vindictive, mischievous cur, that, and, mark me, Maurice, if by any fluke he ever has a chance of squaring accounts with you he will do it; but he's a plausible beggar, and there's no saying what he mayn't persuade Miss Molecombe to do in the time we've given him; however, we may console ourselves with one thing: if a young woman in these days is bent upon marrying the wrong man she will do it sooner or later in spite of everybody. I turn off here, so must say good-bye. I leave Bridge Court in two or three days now, and if you happen to want me *in re* Madingley you know my London address."

Maurice Enderby walked home musing over his interview with Dick Madingley. He had done the best he could think of to prevent Edith Molecombe falling into the hands of the audacious adventurer who had ensnared her affections, but he was forced to admit that Grafton was right, and that, let the girl's father and friends do what they would, it must depend very much upon whether Edith could be brought to see the utter worthlessness of her lover. On one point of the interview Maurice looked back regretfully, and a faint smile played round his mouth as he muttered:

"No, I don't think I am suited to the profession. Ah, if I hadn't been a parson how I would have knocked that fellow down!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

HER HEART FAILED HER.

DICK MADINGLEY paced the drawing-room for a good half-hour after his visitors left him. He had decided before their coming that it behoved him to quit Tunnleton very shortly, and, except for Edith Molecombe, it would suit him just as well to leave the day after to-morrow as a week or two later; he would not see Edith this afternoon, as he was well aware that she had an engagement that would prevent her meeting him, and further, she had told him that she must inevitably be discovered if their meetings were too frequent. She was to see him to-morrow, and the question was, should he be able to persuade her to elope with him on the following day? Dick had a pretty genius for intrigue; no, he would not go by the morning train, for that was the train which Tunnleton chiefly affected, for the obvious reason that it gave them a long day in town; no, he would go by the mid-day train, and, if he could persuade Edith to come with him, well, he would take her; they must not go together, and he thought if Edith travelled up second-class and closely veiled she would run little risk of recognition; he would get her ticket for her and contrive to slip it into her hand as she passed into the station; once there she must stick closely to the ladies' room till the train came in, and then, if she slipped quickly into her carriage, he thought in the confusion she would escape all observation. Would he be able to persuade her to this step so abruptly? Dick Madingley had great confidence in his power over the girl; if that confounded parson had only given him another week or ten days he would have had no fears as to the result, but most girls are startled at the idea when such a step is first proposed to them. Dick knew this, and though by no means troubled with diffidence, felt that he might not succeed.

Grafton read him truly; he might bluster about what he was going to do, but Dick Madingley knew a good deal better than to risk an inquiry into his social status by any of the Tunnleton people. No, he would settle the few bills he owed in the town that afternoon, for Dick was not an adventurer of the petty sort that swindles the tradespeople of the place in which they conduct their campaign; he flew at higher game than that, and, but for the inopportune appearance of John Madingley on the scene, would probably have won the prize for which he strove. This aim, just now, was a wealthy marriage, and in Edith Molecombe he imagined he had found a young lady who must eventually come into a good bit of money, and whose father, if he liked, could behave very handsomely to her at present. He might have had to run away with her in any case, but he would have figured in a very different light before Tunnleton had his imposition

regarding John Madingley not been discovered. Yes, if ever a man of his temperament had a debt to settle with another he had with Maurice Enderby, and he vowed that, should the chance ever come, Mr. Enderby should be paid in full. Curiously enough his animosity was but slightly roused as regarded Grafton, but his antipathy to Maurice was of long standing and had increased in intensity day by day: this was the culmination of it, and Dick Madingley was not likely to be very scrupulous should he ever see his way to revenge.

Dick Madingley had been sitting on the stile leading into Kilroe Wood a good half-hour, and was beginning to wonder whether Edith would keep her appointment, when a light step behind him caught his ear, and, in another moment, Miss Molecombe was by his side.

"I am very sorry I am late, Dick, but I had a good deal of difficulty to get here at all. I can't help thinking they suspect something; papa said last night that he could not think what you were still hanging about Tunnleton for, a place in which, he said, you were utterly discredited, and further added that if he for one moment thought it were on my account he would pack me off to my aunt in Wales, and then, as usual, we came to high words, which ended in my flouncing out of the room and having a good cry upstairs."

"It is as I thought, darling," replied Mr. Madingley, "your father is commencing to play the domestic tyrant. As long as you stand to me, you will be continually talked at. It is too much to ask of any girl to bear that. Better tell your father at once, dear, that you give me up, and then they would let you alone."

"You don't mean it, Dick, you can't; you know I wouldn't give you up."

"I think perhaps it would be best for you, dearest. I must leave this to-morrow, and though as long as there is a hope of winning your hand I shall be true, yet it is trying you too hard to hold you to your engagement. Tell your father it is broken."

"Dick! Dick, don't think so meanly of me; do you think I cannot wait and suffer patiently for your sake?" and Edith thought how unselfish and chivalrous her lover was in endeavouring to make their parting as easy as possible for her.

"Yes, it must be so," replied Madingley. "It will be sad and dreary work for me, but there is no alternative, unless——" and here he paused abruptly, with apparent confusion.

"Unless what?" she exclaimed anxiously.

"Nothing, nothing. Don't ask me: I never ought to have said what I did; forget those last two or three words."

"No, I claim to hear what you were about to suggest," replied Edith; "if there is any other course open to us, I've a right to decide whether I will take it."

At first Dick Madingley positively refused to explain himself, but gradually the specious impostor allowed Edith to draw from him that she might be freed from all annoyances and their mutual

happiness secured if she could make up her mind to run away with him the next morning.

At first Edith was frightened out of her life at the bare suggestion, but gradually as Dick unfolded his scheme, and pointed out to her the extreme simplicity of it, she began to listen to him, and before they parted she had pledged herself to meet him at the Tunnleton Station, and elope with him by the midday train, and then Miss Molecombe scampered home with a heightened pulse and a heart beating with unnatural rapidity.

If Edith wanted any strengthening in her resolution it was administered to her that night. Business at the bank had gone a little awry; it was not that anything serious had occurred, but an unpleasant mistake had been made with regard to one of their best customers' accounts, and the customer in question, who was a wealthy and irascible man, had gone the length of blowing up Mr. Molecombe in his own bank parlour about the carelessness of his subordinates. That Mr. Molecombe had passed that on, and made things pretty lively all round for the subordinates in question, it is almost needless to add, but unluckily he had not wholly worked off his irritation at his place of business, and poured forth the remnant of his wrath on his own family. Having pronounced the cook utterly incompetent, and marvelled why Mrs. Molecombe continued to keep a woman so incapable of cooking a mutton chop, having informed his butler that he was an idiot, who, after many years' experience, seemed to know less about what should be the proper temperature of the wine than a charity school-boy, he, when the servants withdrew, commenced to talk *at* his daughter, perhaps the most exasperating form of attack: he said nothing to Edith, and poured forth a flood of ridicule and abuse to his wife on the subject of Dick Madingley. At last Edith, springing to her feet, exclaimed, with flashing and tear-stained eyes, that she would bear it no longer, that she believed none of these lies that were circulated about Mr. Madingley, and that even if they were true he might recollect that with his own consent Dick Madingley had been affianced to her for weeks. That she had given him her love, and, come what might, she would not sit still and hear him thrown stones at. "I can bear these taunts no longer, and sooner than continue to endure them I shall seek a home elsewhere."

"You had better seek your pillow at once, Miss," replied Mr. Molecombe furiously, "and as for the home, if this is not good enough for you, I'll make arrangements for you to reside with your aunt in Wales. The scenery is magnificent, and as for society I believe there are the goats," concluded Mr. Molecombe with grim irony.

"Good-night, mamma," said Edith in a low tone, and without even glancing at her father she quickly left the room.

Mrs. Molecombe was a rather weak woman and stood in no little awe of her domineering husband, but she loved her daughter

dearly, and no sooner had the door closed than she took up the cudgels on her behalf.

"You are too hard upon her, Alick, you are indeed," she exclaimed; "the girl has met with a bitter disappointment and is naturally very sore at heart. Why cannot you give the wound time to heal? Why will you not suffer her to do her best to forget him? You don't know the suffering you inflict. You don't know that when a girl has given her heart away what a desert life seems to her when she is told that her lover is worthless and that she must give him up."

"Confound it, woman," rejoined Mr. Molecombe, in milder tones and with no little contrition for his past ill-temper, "you don't mean to say that it was my fault we did not discover this Madingley was a liar and a scoundrel sooner."

"No, Alick; but cannot you understand that alluding to her lover's iniquities is dropping nitric acid into Edith's wounds? Pray, pray, leave the subject alone before her. Don't let the name of Richard Madingley ever pass your lips."

"Well, well, perhaps I'm wrong, but the whole thing, you know, has been so deuced disagreeable. I am quite the laughing-stock of the town, and then Edith makes me mad by standing up for the young villain; but I'll do my best, I'll try not to say anything about him before Edith, and if, as I hope, he clears out of Tunnleton before many days are over, that will make it all the easier."

The banker lingered over his breakfast the next morning in the hope of making friends with his daughter, but Edith's maid reported that her mistress was suffering from a bad headache, and wanted nothing but a cup of tea in her own room. Mr. Molecombe of course went up to see her, but Edith declared she was suffering chiefly from the effects of a bad night and only wanted quiet and to be let alone. She had made up her mind that this would be her best chance of escaping all observation; it was easy enough to get out of the house and make her way to the station, but the difficulty was to carry a hand-bag with her; more baggage she dared not attempt, but even that little would attract attention should any of the servants catch sight of her departure. Once clear of the house, and the getting to the station by roads by which she was not likely to meet acquaintances was easy. In due course she rang for her maid and dressed, then ordered a cup of strong beef-tea and desired not to be disturbed till luncheon time. A quarter of an hour afterwards, and, closely veiled, hot though the weather was, with her dressing-bag in her hand, she stole down the back stairs into the garden; a light shawl thrown carelessly over her arm veiled the dressing-bag. One piece of lawn dangerously open to observation was safely crossed, and then Edith plunged into the shrubberies and felt safe. No chance of meeting any one now, unless it was some under-gardener. No. She felt the perils of her enterprize were over until she arrived in the purlieus of Tunnleton Station.

Edith passed into the booking-office unnoticed, and then stood irresolute, not knowing how to act. She glanced at the clock, and saw there was a quarter of an hour yet before the train was due. Had she better take her ticket while the office was as yet uncrowded, or leave the obtaining of it to Dick?

While she still hesitated a voice whispered in her ear:

"Go into the waiting-room at once; don't come out till the bell rings, and then jump as quickly as possible into the nearest carriage," while at the same time she felt her ticket slipped into her hand.

Without turning her head she made her way into the waiting-room as directed, and there, in a state of some trepidation, awaited the signal of the coming train. A few minutes and the bell rang out its warning for passengers to take their seats. Grasping her dressing-bag, Edith made her way swiftly to the platform; but as she crossed the threshold stopped paralyzed, for there, not half a score paces from her, stood her father in animated conversation with some gentleman, whom he was apparently seeing off to London. To reach her part of the train she must pass close to him, and she could hardly hope that he would not instantly recognize her. Her heart failed her, she shrank back again into the waiting-room, intent only on escaping her father's recognition.

Dick Madingley had been also terribly discomposed by the appearance of the banker. He judged it wisest to attract as little attention to himself as possible, and, therefore, instead of lingering, as he had intended, to see Edith emerge from the waiting-room, he got into his carriage and took a seat on the far side from the window. Another two or three minutes and they were off, and Madingley was left to wonder the whole way up whether his *fiancée* had effected her escape.

"It could hardly have been a mere chance," he muttered; "this is some of Enderby's work, I'll be bound. I've no doubt he or his creatures have dogged my every footstep; he doubtless bribed some one of my servants to know by what train I was going to town, and put old Molecombe up to seeing me off. His taking his stand where he did was probably accident, but there he was like a terrier at a rabbit-hole. I don't suppose Edith is in the train; she is a clever and a plucky girl if she managed to get past him."

On his arrival in London, Mr. Madingley speedily convinced himself that his surmise was correct, and, with a furious malediction on Maurice Enderby, he drove off to the scene of his usual avocations.

In supposing that the banker's appearance at the station was due to Maurice Enderby, Dick Madingley was mistaken. It was the result of pure accident. The irascible customer of the day before had called in to have a little more talk with Mr. Molecombe of a less fiery description, and, not having been able to quite finish his say and being at the same time anxious to catch the

London train, the banker had walked down to the station with him in order to finish their discussion.

His client off, Mr. Molecombe at once turned his back upon the railway and retraced his steps to the bank. But Edith had no more idea of this than her lover: Conscience-stricken, she thought her premeditated elopement had been discovered, and sat trembling in the most retired corner of the waiting-room, expecting every instant to see her father enter in search of her. When a quarter-of-an-hour had elapsed, and she saw no sign of any one in quest of her, she ventured to peep once more cautiously out of the door. The platform was nearly deserted; except for a boy cutting papers at the bookstall and a grimy gentleman assiduously engaged in cleaning lamps, there was no one visible. The very porters were all over on the other side of the line, awaiting the down train.

Edith began to recover her courage. Whatever caused her father's presence there, it was possible, could she only regain her home unnoticed, that her escapade of this morning might be kept a secret. Fortune favoured her, and she regained her own room unnoticed, some quarter-of-an-hour before luncheon, without any one suspecting that she had been beyond the shrubberies.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"THE SPOTTED DOG."

TUNNLETON was quite in a ferment during the next day or two. The Torkeslys, the Prauns, and the Maddoxes were much excited about the sudden departure of Richard Madingley.

"Given up his house, by Jove!" said General Maddox in his usual deliberate tones; "paid off all his servants, and has cleared off without beat of drum; hasn't left a P.P.C. card anywhere that I can hear. Looks queer, sir. Gad, I don't believe that fellow was quite right after all!"

"Right, Maddox!" replied the irascible Praun, who was always in extremes, and who flew from one view to a diametrically opposite one, quickly as the wind flies round the compass, "I have no doubt he was the most confounded impostor that ever put foot in the place. Took us all in, damn his impudence!"

"Very disgraceful, Praun," replied General Maddox, shaking his head; "though, to do him justice, he did give good dinners."

"Yes," replied the other; "and, scoundrel though he was," a remark, by the way, for which General Praun had very scant justification, "I should like to know, before he is hung, where he got his after-dinner sherry; but I don't know what's coming to us: the place is getting turned topsy-turvy; what do you think I passed on my way here? Mrs. Enderby, if you please, driving a carriage and a pair of ponies. Now I hate gossip; I don't want to meddle in my neighbour's affairs, but when you see a phenomenon, such

as a curate setting up his carriage and pair, one can't help asking how he does it."

"Livery stable, probably," rejoined General Maddox; "trap for the day, you know; two ponies, though? Quite beyond his means," concluded the general, with a shake of his head.

"Means!" cried Praun; "nothing is beyond the means of a gambler while he is in luck. How Jarrow can reconcile it to his conscience, how Tunnleton can submit to a parson within its midst, who, instead of attending to his duties, is devoted to speculating on the turf, passes my comprehension!" and in good truth for the next few days the backslidings of Richard Madingley and Maurice Enderby divided the attention of the town.

But for all that there are not wanting in any community worshippers of the rising sun. To these worldly people that Mrs. Enderby should have turned out a veritable niece of John Madingley and have set up her pony-carriage were signs indicative of coming prosperity that they deemed unwise to neglect. They reminded each other that the Enderbys, although they had said nothing, had always held strictly aloof from Richard Madingley's entertainments: in fact a slight reaction was already setting in in Maurice's favour, although the two generals had by no means abandoned their hostile attitude.

But now that fatal wedding gift once more began to haunt Maurice, once more to send the blood dancing through his veins, once more aroused visions of a broad, green-ribboned turf, white rails, silken jackets, and half a score of horses tearing up "the straight" at full speed. Doncaster meeting commenced in a few days; the sporting papers were, so far, nearly unanimous in predicting that the "Wandering Nun" would win the Champagne Stakes, and, strive to banish it from his mind though he might, it was all no use, and Maurice Enderby was once more feverishly anxious about the result of the race. He had not dared to ask Grafton to telegraph to him again, although he knew that gentleman would be at Doncaster. The *employés* at the telegraph office are not altogether reticent about the messages that pass through their hands, and it was pretty well known through Tunnleton that Mr. Enderby had been the first man in the town to know of the "Wandering Nun's" victory at Goodwood.

Generals Maddox and Praun could hardly be blamed for holding that Maurice speculated on the turf, for it would be very difficult to have persuaded the Tunnleton people generally of that, and while the respectable part of the community regarded a betting clergyman as an anomaly that could not be suffered in these days, there was a minor and godless section who had much admiration for Mr. Enderby's astuteness. It is hard to stem the tide of calumny, more especially when such calumny is based on such apparent grounds as there were in Maurice's case. His own acts too combined strongly to strengthen the prevalent belief, the interest

he had manifested in racing, the telegram, his sudden command of money, and, last not least, what his enemies in Tunnton termed his arrogance and effrontery in setting up a carriage and pair of ponies.

Most of us have some few sworn friends who will stand by us unflinchingly should disaster overtake us, who, if unable to assist us in our trouble, we know will always meet us with sincere sympathy and a hearty hand-grip; there are others who, though loyal enough in the first instance, begin to waver as the tide runs high, who begin to calculate and doubt whether they are prudent in championing what looks like a lost cause. Politic and rather timid people some of these, willing to take our part in the first instance, but afraid that it may be to their own detriment to continue their partizanship when they find the clouds of popular opinion are gathering thickly around us. Now this was rather Mr. Jarrow's case; he had stood stanchly by Maurice in the first instance, but even that had not been friendship, but his natural obstinacy, combined with much indignation that men like Generals Maddox and Praun should venture to interfere in affairs of his. But he was beginning now to waver in his belief in his curate; evidence continued apparently to accumulate against Mr. Enderby, and that Tunnton gave credence to such evidence was unmistakable. Maurice too declined any explanation, and, except to the rector, had hardly condescended to deny the accusation brought against him. Mr. Jarrow began to think that it behoved Maurice at least to refute the charge to the utmost extent of his power. He, the rector, in his interview with Generals Maddox and Praun had actually blustered about bringing an action for libel, and yet Maurice sat down supinely under the scandal, and made no effort to remove the taint from his name. The rector was of a pugnacious disposition, and never happy unless engaged in a wordy war with somebody, and it was wormwood to him that Maurice, by the attitude he had taken, precluded all continuance of his quarrel with the two generals.

In good truth, ever since Grafton had put the idea into his head, which John Madingley had considerably strengthened, Maurice had been weighing in his mind the propriety of his giving up the Church. He had tried it, and, though he had conscientiously performed his duties, still he felt he was in no wise fitted for the profession. He had taken to it as a means of living, but before seeking ordination as priest he felt that a man should have some higher feeling regarding it than that, and now he was once more bitten by the turf fever, and, do what he would, could not keep the "Champagnes" out of his head. The success of the "Wandering Nun" was not the great object which it had been to him when she secured her first victory; he was no longer pressed for money, but nobody exists in such affluent circumstances as not to be very well pleased at the idea of having a little more of that useful commodity. Still it was not so much that, as was the

interest he took in the career of the flying filly; and if it had not made a penny difference to him he would have been still as deeply interested in the issue of her forthcoming essay at Doncaster.

The next two or three days slipped by, and at last came the opening day of the great Yorkshire meeting, and Maurice knew that at three o'clock this race, the winner of which so often made his mark in turf history, was to be decided. As the afternoon wore on he could no longer control his restlessness. They must know it in the town now, the telegram must have arrived at the club, but he did not wish to make any further scandal. He supposed he must wait till he got his paper the next morning, but he was resolute not to look in at the club for fear of what might be said as to his reason for coming there.

He wandered aimlessly about the town till in an evil moment his vagrant footsteps brought him outside a second-class hotel called "The Spotted Dog." He knew this house by repute, he knew it bore the reputation of being a sporting-house, and he had heard some of the young men at the club declare that they knew what had won a big race at "The Spotted Dog" always a quarter of an hour sooner than anywhere else in Tunnleton. In an evil moment he resolved just to step in and ask the question. He cast a hurried glance up and down the street, but there were not many people moving about, and nobody he knew was in sight. He ran up the three or four steps and glanced rapidly round for some one of whom to make inquiries. A small knot of rather raffish-looking young men were gathered in front of the bar, and one of these saved him all further trouble.

"There you are, sir," he said, pointing to the tissue fastened up in the bar window, "won in a canter; that 'Wandering Nun' is about the best bit of stuff Mr. Brooks ever owned."

Maurice bent his head in acknowledgment of the speaker's civility, and retreated rapidly into the street, which he gained just in time to receive a frigid bow from Miss Torkesly, just issuing from a shop on the other side of the road. Maurice knew all was over as he raised his hat. He felt that Tunnleton would never tolerate this fresh iniquity, that he would be cast out from among them. That question of resigning the Church was being much simplified, as he could not but think, looking back upon his imprudence. There was much likelihood of the Church resigning him. It was well that it was a nice day for walking, for Miss Torkesly had seldom enjoyed a busier time than was her lot that afternoon. To whisper into the ears of all her friends and acquaintances that she had seen Mr. Enderby coming out of "The Spotted Dog" was Miss Torkesly's clear and bounden duty before she slept.

"So dreadful, my dear. Of course we all knew that the poor infatuated man gambled, but I'm afraid he drinks as well."

"It is terrible, but I believe they usually both go together. Fancy, to be seen coming out of 'The Spotted Dog' in broad daylight! I didn't know what to do, and I am afraid I bowed, my dear.

Just fancy! bowing to a man who came out of 'The Spotted Dog.' I was too confused and horrified to see, but I daresay he was even walking unsteadily."

Yes, before twenty-four hours were over, the greater part of Tunneleton was aware of Maurice's delinquency. About how the unfortunate man left "The Spotted Dog" accounts varied according to the imagination of the narrator. He was variously described as being the worse for liquor, having reeled down the street, or carried home insensible to his wife. Such a schedule of wrongdoing as was now filed against Maurice Enderby was more than a man could hope utterly to refute.

It was not likely that Mr. Jarrow would be long left in ignorance of his curate's questionable proceedings. Mrs. Praun picked up the news in the course of her afternoon rambles. The general quite bubbled with excitement upon hearing of it. "Ah," he said, "we will see what Jarrow has to say to this. He took a precious high hand with me, and threatened me—me! General Praun, with an action for libel, told me that he had Mr. Enderby's own word for it that he never bet upon horses, and, when I pointed out his sudden plentiful supply of money, he informed me that he had nothing to do with that. Mr. Enderby had probably relations who assisted him from time to time. Ah!" continued the general, with a triumphant snort, "I suppose he was looking for one of those relatives at 'The Spotted Dog,' and we shall hear next that his duties necessitate his attendance at a public billiard-room; but I'll have it out with Jarrow to-morrow morning."

General Praun was as good as his word. Habitually an early man, he was at the rector's house almost as soon as he had finished his breakfast, and desired to see him. Shown into Mr. Jarrow's study, he plunged at once into his subject, and dilated upon it with such volubility that his astounded host was unable to get a word in.

"I told you so, Jarrow, I have told you all along, that this paragon of a curate of yours was a dissolute young man quite unfitted for his position. There is nothing remarkable in it; you are not the first rector by many who has been similarly deceived; but you are so obstinate; you shut your ears to what your parishioners tell you."

"Obstinate? me?" suddenly interposed the Rev. Jacob. "If there was ever a man open to conviction; if ever there was a man prepared to listen to facts or contravention of his own opinions, I flatter myself I am that man."

"Very good, then," said General Praun. "You have been told that Enderby gambles. You now hear upon unimpeachable testimony that he frequents what, though he may call it a second-class hotel, I should denominate a sporting public. If you think that befitting one of your cloth well and good, but you won't find Tunneleton agree with you."

"I need scarcely say," rejoined Mr. Jarrow, who had by this time somewhat recovered himself, "that I have heard nothing of this

before; that I should make inquiry into such a rumour is matter of course."

"It is no matter of rumour, I tell you," snapped Praun irritably.

"Then, sir," rejoined Mr. Jarrow in his pompous manner, "it will be so much the easier to investigate. Rumours are difficult to grapple with; facts demand explanation. I shall withhold my opinion till I have spoken to Mr. Enderby on the subject."

And the rather stately bow with which Mr. Jarrow intimated that their interview was at an end made the hot-tempered Praun's very pulses tingle.

"They take too much upon themselves, these parsons. By Jove! Jarrow dismissed me as I used to dismiss a subaltern in the old days. Bowed me out as if I had been a mere nobody instead of a general officer." And with these thoughts Praun fumed along on his way to study the daily papers at the Club.

CHAPTER XXX.

"BETTER I SHOULD RETIRE NOW."

MAURICE told his wife that evening what had happened; and Bessie at first by no means realized the consequence of his imprudence. She did not even know, as was very natural, the name of this second-class hostelry. She did not see that because upon one occasion her husband once entered a hotel it should be looked upon as any great crime on his part. A score of reasons might have taken him there—reasons which might be proclaimed from the house-tops. And it was not until Maurice explained to her that "The Spotted Dog" had the reputation of being a sporting-house, pointed out to her that Doncaster races were going on, and reminded her that he had been charged with betting on horse-racing, and that, though it was not true, his denial thereof had never been half believed in Tunnleton,—that she grasped what would probably be the outcome of this last imprudence.

"Ah, Maurice," she said, "Uncle John meant well, and from a money point of view his gift has proved princely, but I am afraid it will turn out a fatal wedding present in the end."

"You are always saying that," he rejoined testily; "but I think this last escapade is very likely to terminate my engagement at Tunnleton. Jarrow stood by me in the first instance like a thorough gentleman. He took my word that the charge was false, and refused to listen further to what my traducers said, but, looking back, I think that was due in part to the natural combativeness of his nature; moreover, he will very likely tire of perpetually fighting my battles. Do you know, Bessie, I am thinking seriously of giving up the Church."

Now, much as he had thought over this himself, Maurice had never said a word to his wife on the subject, and her first feeling was that of repugnance at the idea. "Oh, Maurice," she said, "you would surely never do that!"

"Why not?" he said; "it is surely better that I should retire now than become positively enrolled in a profession for which I feel I am unfitted. I shall never make a good clergyman, but I think I have stuff in me, and could do good work in some other calling."

Still, Bessie was not to be reconciled to the idea; she urged him to consider well what he was about, pointing out that, though he might have been imprudent, he had really done nothing wrong, and that there were other places besides Tunnleton in which he could obtain a curacy.

"Oh, it's a thing that there will be plenty of time to think about. Jarrow is not likely to wish me to leave until he has found some one to supply my place. However, we shall doubtless have some conversation on the subject to-morrow, as a conflagration in a high wind spreadeth not so quick as scandal in the mouth of the *Torkeslys*."

Maurice had not long to wait. General Praun had left the house not ten minutes when a servant was on his way to Mr. Enderby's with a note, intimating that the rector wanted to see him as soon as possible. Maurice was quite as anxious for the interview as Mr. Jarrow, and accordingly lost no time in making the best of his way to the rectory. He was admitted at once to the Reverend Jacob's sanctum, and there found that gentleman in a most unmistakable state of fume and fidget. It was matter of deep annoyance to Mr. Jarrow when any *protégé* of his—and he was much given to taking people up—was found wanting; he prided himself especially upon insight into character, and that his swans should occasionally turn out geese was always sore vexation to him. He snatched greedily at all petty pieces of patronage which fell at all within his reach; from the nomination of a pew-opener to recommending a man as a fit candidate for the town constabulary, Mr. Jarrow always endeavoured to have a finger in the pie; that any curate of his should be deemed unfit for his position was casting much discredit on his sagacity.

"Sit down, Mr. Enderby," he remarked, their first greetings over. "I have sent for you upon a very unpleasant business; but the fact has been pointedly brought to my notice, and it is incumbent upon me to ask you for an explanation."

"I will save you all further preamble, Mr. Jarrow," replied Maurice. "You have been told that I was seen coming out of 'The Spotted Dog' yesterday. Perfectly true, I was.—Why did I go in there? To learn the result of a race in which my wife's uncle, John Madingley, had got a horse running. Had I any bets on it? Most certainly not. I never have bet upon horse-racing, except in a very trifling way before I married, and most assuredly I have never wagered a sixpence since on that or anything else."

Mr. Jarrow paused for some minutes before he replied. He thoroughly believed Maurice, but then he felt at the same time that nineteen people out of twenty in Tunnleton would not.

"Mr. Enderby," he said at length, "although I am quite willing to accept your explanation, you must be aware that the public will not. As some eminent man, whose name just now I forget, has said, mistakes are worse than crimes. You must forgive my saying that since you have been among us your life seems to have been a succession of blunders. You have, by your own imprudence, put yourself so completely in the wrong light, that I am afraid it will be impossible to convince the public that you don't gamble, and, from what I heard this morning, they are likely to add drink to your transgressions. I have stood by you as long as I could, but you must excuse my saying," and few would have given the pompous rector credit for the kindness with which the words fell from his lips, "that, under the circumstances, you can exercise no influence for good in the parish."

"I quite agree with you, Mr. Jarro," replied Maurice quickly, "and, as you were doubtless about to say it is better under those circumstances we should part, we will look upon that as clearly understood between us, and I shall remain now only so long as suits your convenience."

"Well, Mr. Enderby, you have taken the words out of my mouth, but I do think that will be the best arrangement we can arrive at. Shall we say, sir, about two months from this date? That will give you time to look round as well as me."

"I have to thank you, Mr. Jarro," said Maurice rising, "for much kindness since I have been here, and shall be very glad to time my departure with regard to your convenience. As for myself, let me tell you in strict confidence that I have quite made up my mind to resign the profession. And now, for the present, I will say good-morning."

Mr. Jarro remained for some time after Maurice's departure in a brown study. He shook his head two or three times, like a man who has come across a phenomenon beyond his comprehension. He had had curates resign before now, but this was his first experience of a young man resigning the profession as well as the curacy.

It soon became evident to Maurice that Tunnleton society was unfeignedly shocked at the last scandal in connection with his name. That he should dabble in horse-racing had been deplorable, shocking in the eyes of most people, but a clergyman who "frequented public houses" (that he had only been seen entering one once was a fact quite lost sight of) had put himself quite without the pale. When Tunnleton heard that he was going away, it shook its head, and opined that Mr. Jarro could do no less. It was a sad pity that a young man should be so depraved, but of course he was useless in his present position and Tunnleton feared would do no good anywhere. And now curiously enough a reaction set in in favour of Mrs. Enderby. How it began one hardly knew, but Bessie had made some few friends in the place and it probably owed its origin to them. It suddenly became the

fashion to express great commiseration for "poor Mrs. Enderby," and society delighted to paint imaginary pictures of Bessie vainly attempting to keep her husband in the straight path. It was difficult to say which suffered most from the new order of things—Maurice or his wife. He on his part was subject to the most freezing return to his salutations, but I doubt if that was so hard to bear as the ostentatious pity to which his wife was subjected. Nothing was ever said to her, but the ladies of Tunnleton had determined that she was to be pitied and condoled with, and their faces could not have expressed more mournful sympathy had she been lamenting the actual loss of her husband. They both agreed that Tunnleton was unendurable, and Maurice speedily asked Mr Jarrold to release him as soon as possible.

Two people there were whom Maurice determined to take into his confidence. One of these was Frank Chylton, to whom he had already told his story of his singular wedding gift. He now thought it only right to explain to him the itching curiosity that had led him to commit the imprudence of entering "The Spotted Dog." The other was General Shrewster. The latter had heard the whole story of the wedding present from John Madingley, and the comic side of the business had tickled him immensely.

"I can understand his reticence," he said, "but I am afraid it is destined to do him a good deal of harm here. You see this is an eminently respectable place, extremely orthodox and all that sort of thing, and when people are that, they are always not willing but greedy to believe the very worst of their neighbours."

But when Maurice told him of this second imprudence the general simply roared with laughter.

"My dear Enderby," he said, "how could you do it? You know you were, so to speak, under the ban of Tunnleton, now you'll be positively outlawed; what are you going to do? You will never make head against it."

"I am not going to try," replied Maurice quietly; "I have resigned my curacy and am only waiting now as a convenience to Mr. Jarrold. Further, general, I consider myself unsuited to the profession, and am going to adopt some other calling."

"There I think you are right; it's a pity that you've thrown away a whole year, but anything is better than a life-long mistake. I can only say I shall be very glad to help you should it at all lie in my power. As far as ways and means go, your uncle promised to assist you to a start; still, I should be afraid his interest would lie chiefly in the profession you are about to abandon. For myself, I have none except in my old trade."

"Thank you very much, general," replied Maurice; "I will ask for your good word without fail should I want it, but at present I have not made up my mind as to what I shall do."

"Will you let me give you one piece of advice, the warning of a man who has been through the furnace: keep clear of the race-

course whatever you do. I was a rich man once, and should be so now had I not been bitten by the turf tarantula. I took the fever very badly, and, unless I very much mistake, you are a man likely to contract it in its most virulent form. It makes your pulses tingle even now, and you will probably be quite carried away if you find yourself in the thick of the fray. There, I am going to say no more," said the general laughing; "a word is more likely to be remembered than a sermon in these cases. Of course my mouth is closed about what you have told me, but I think the sooner you allow Chylton and myself to make the whole story public the better."

"I don't want it published until I am gone," replied Maurice; "I am too angry to care to right myself in the eyes of the people here; and now I will say good-bye for the present."

CHAPTER XXXI.

A LITTLE DINNER.

NEXT week brought two things to Maurice Enderby: first, a jubilant letter from old John Madingley, inclosing a very handsome cheque on account of the "Champagnes," "and though," he added, "I was not there to see, and indeed never have seen the 'Wandering Nun' run except that time at Goodwood, yet I am convinced she is the best I ever owned; let her only keep well and the Oaks is a moral certainty for her next spring." The other letter was from Bob Grafton, and ran as follows:

"DEAR MAURICE,

"I am afraid you are about the most hopelessly ruined man of my acquaintance. A man who has only to sit still and see hundred-pound notes dropping into his lap is certain to deteriorate; he is bound to get out of the idea of ever earning his living in future. The filly is a clipper, and made a perfect show of her field on Tuesday. By the way, I met young Balders at Doncaster and he tells me that you are about to leave Tunnleton. What does that mean? Are you tired of it or has the petulant little place tired of you? When we cast out from its bosom your most virulent foe—Richard Madingley—if that really is his name—I thought that Tunnleton would be bound to acknowledge its obligation to you. Do you know I saw that precious young scoundrel in the outer ring on the Leger day; he was in close conference with Pick and one or two more of the same kidney; you may depend upon it he is a regular hanger-on of the turf: I don't mean of the jackal species, but he has no more right to the social status he assumed in Tunnleton than he probably has to the name of Richard Madingley. I shall be glad to hear about why you are leaving Tunnleton, also what are your intended movements. I presume you are in search of a fresh curacy, or can it be possible that you have made up your mind to resign the profession? Kindest regards to Mrs. Enderby, and tell her her pretty turn-out requires no outriders,

though I admit the 'Wandering Nun' is enough to tempt her fortunate owners into the most profuse expenditure.

"Ever yours,

"ROBERT GRAFTON."

As he finished the letter Maurice could not help thinking that perhaps the one good thing he had done at Tunnleton was compelling Richard Madingley to leave the place, and so saving Edith Molecombe from rushing on her fate. He little dreamt of how, if chance had not intervened, his efforts would have been unavailing, and that, but for a valued client of her father's having proved rather long-winded, Edith would have been the partner of Dick Madingley's compulsory retreat. The person who not a little astonished Maurice at this juncture was Mr. Molecombe; the banker had called upon the Enderbys at the instigation of his partner, Frank Chylton, when they first made their appearance in Tunnleton, and when the rumours to Maurice's discredit arose there could be no doubt that he rather dropped them. He did not take a rabid view of Maurice's conduct like General Praun, and thought, probably, that report considerably exaggerated his misdoings, but he did think that Mr. Enderby was not exactly an acquaintance to cultivate. He was cautious and civil enough when they met, but he no longer asked the Enderbys to his house. Now a reaction had arisen in his mind; he knew that Maurice was *bonâ fide* John Madingley's nephew by marriage, just as he knew that Dick was an impostor. Very sore about the somewhat ridiculous position he had been placed in, he had a sort of hazy idea that he owed reparation to the right man; he felt that he had been swayed very much in his judgment by Richard Madingley, and, being a tolerably clear-sighted man, thought that Maurice had perhaps had hard justice dealt out to him. Mr. Jarrow, for instance, would hardly have taken his curate's part without being satisfied that the allegations against him were untrue; as for this last scandal, he had taken the trouble to make a few inquiries concerning it, and easily ascertained that "frequenting" meant that he had been once seen coming out of "The Spotted Dog." As Mr. Molecombe remarked to himself, "A gentleman don't live close upon a twelvemonth in a place like Tunnleton without the fact of his frequenting public-houses being known."

Maurice, unable to think of any other reason for the banker's increased cordiality, at last attributed it to the satisfactory balance standing to his account, still, he was rather taken aback at Bessie's getting a note from Mrs. Molecombe asking them to waive ceremony and come and dine in a friendly way.

There are wheels within wheels even in an invitation to dinner; and the conceit would be taken out of a good many of us could we know the real reason why we are bidden to the feast. We should be astonished to find how rarely it is for our own sakes. It was quite true that Mr. Molecombe was disposed to be much more

cordial to the Enderbys than he had been, but for this invitation they were indebted in a great measure to his daughter. Edith Molecombe was much depressed about the tangle of her love-affair. That she was very earnest in her love for Dick Madingley was evinced by her consenting to elope with him. She had heard nothing of him since that brief peremptory whisper in Tunnleton Station when he had slipped her ticket into her hand. She had heard—it is difficult to say quite how, but young ladies in Edith's situation do contrive to get news of their truant lovers in marvellous fashion—that Mr. Enderby and a strange gentleman had called upon Richard Madingley only a day or two before his departure. Now Edith Molecombe knew very well that Maurice was no friend of Dick Madingley; she knew, on the contrary, that the Enderbys had been rather pointedly excluded from the two or three garden-parties Dick had given. It was therefore, decidedly, not as a friend that Maurice would call there. She fretted dreadfully over this mysterious silence on the part of her lover; he must have seen her father at the station, and have understood why she had to abandon their scheme. She was unable to write to him, as she did not know his address; but he, if he chose, could have no difficulty in letting her hear from him. Whatever Mr. Enderby's business might have been, it was possible that it might throw some light upon her lover's silence. In the course of the evening, she thought, she should have no difficulty in questioning Maurice on this point.

The Enderbys, at Maurice's instigation, accepted the invitation. He was quite as curious to have some conversation with Edith Molecombe as she was with him. He knew her but slightly, and had taken no particular interest in her till the events of the last few days had brought her so prominently to his notice.

The only people asked to meet them were the Chyltons. These acted as a sort of connecting link between the Enderbys and their host, and, as the banker kept an undeniable cook, the little dinner passed off gaily. A regret was expressed at the coming departure of Maurice and his wife, but the subject was not unduly dwelt upon. Richard Madingley and his misdemeanours were naturally not alluded to; and, in short, when the gentlemen joined the ladies in the drawing-room, everything had gone off most sociably and pleasantly. Mr. Molecombe was no niggard, he thoroughly enjoyed entertaining, and, though he would have been puzzled to explain what had induced him to give this little banquet, yet he had got on very well with Maurice, and had come to the conclusion that gentleman was a very good fellow. Taking up his favourite position on the hearthrug, Mr. Molecombe rather confused Mrs. Chylton and Mrs. Enderby by favouring them with his views on the political state of the country, while Edith carried Maurice off to a distant table to look over photographs. She was a young lady of considerable determination, and lost no time in broaching the subject that was nearest her heart.

"Mr. Enderby," she said in a low voice, "I have one question to ask you. Will you answer it?"

"If it really is only one question," rejoined Maurice, smiling, "I think I might say yes; but one question is very apt to lead to a string."

"Why did you call upon Mr. Madingley last week? He was no friend of yours, surely?"

"Certainly not," said Maurice, "I called to see him on business."

"That is no answer," replied the girl quickly, "what business?"

"That is another question, and I must think a moment before I answer it."

There was a pause of several seconds, and then Maurice continued:

"I am not sure that it would be fair to tell you that. Like everybody else in Tunnleton, I am of course aware of the relation in which you lately stood to him. I should be exceedingly sorry to say anything that might hurt your feelings, and therefore, if you please, we will leave the subject where it is."

"No, no," she said quickly, "tell me all; whether for good or evil I have a right to know what men say concerning him."

Again Maurice hesitated for some little time. At last he answered slowly, "Perhaps you are right, you ought to know. If I give you pain, forgive me. At any rate I will be brief. I saw Richard Madingley, in company with a friend of mine, to inform him that he was down here under false colours, and that it was my duty to unmask him before all Tunnleton, unless he thought proper to avoid such scandal by leaving the place in forty-eight hours."

"And what induced you to tell such a lie as that?" said Edith, with quivering lips.

"I had tolerable proof of what I asserted, and that Mr. Madingley thought there was some truth in it was proved by his accepting my terms and leaving Tunnleton within the time specified. We will drop the subject now, if you please, Miss Molecombe, but you may rest assured of one thing, that Mr. Richard Madingley is not at all what he passed for in Tunnleton, and that it is extremely doubtful whether that is even his name." And with that Maurice rose from his chair with a hint that perhaps they had better join the circle.

"You don't quite like the idea, Bessie, of my giving up the Church," said Maurice as he drove his wife home; "but do you know the three friends I have mentioned it to have not uttered a syllable of remonstrance. General Shrewster and Grafton, on the contrary, clearly think I am right in doing so; while as for dear old Frank Chylton, he has clearly regarded me as a square peg in a round hole ever since I have been here."

"You know best, Maurice, still I confess to a feeling that it is too late for you to turn back now."

"You forget that I am only in the novitiate, and not as yet actually elected to the ministry."

Bessie said no more, but she still had her doubts as to whether her husband would be right in doing this thing.

Edith Molecombe retired to her own room as soon as the visitors had left; but it was very late that night before she sought her pillow. She had had her interview with Maurice Enderby, and for the first time unbelief in her lover sprang up in her mind. She had been very much impressed by Maurice's manner; unlike her father he had hesitated at speaking at all about Richard Madingley; when he did speak it was in the quiet, resolute tones of a man confident of his assertions and of his power to prove them. He had passed over her insult, and Edith's face blushed even now as she thought how very rude she had been to him in her own home. Careless of that, he had been only anxious to warn her that her lover was not what he represented himself to be, and to caution her against trusting in his words. That said, he had evidently no wish to touch further on the subject. Could it be so? Was it the old story? Had she also set up for herself a false idol and fallen down and worshipped? She had refused to believe her father, she had refused to believe all stories to Dick Madingley's detriment that reached her ears; but Maurice Enderby had cast doubts into her mind, and for the first time she felt that it was well her future was yet in her own hands.

Generals Maddox and Praun were much exercised in their minds when they met upon the Promenade the morning after the banker's little dinner. To have given a stranger a mutton-chop in Tunnleton unknown to the community would have been difficult. Mr. Molecombe's entertainment, it need scarcely be said, was already talked about.

"I really am surprised at Molecombe," said General Maddox. "Think of a respectable man like him entertaining a dissolute young man like Enderby, a perfect scandal to his cloth. Upon my honour, I don't know what society is coming to."

"Shameful! disgraceful! I call it," replied General Praun, angrily. "That is where it is, sir; the plutocracy is playing the very devil with the country. Molecombe is a man of business; Molecombe is a mammon worshipper. What does Molecombe care about a man's private character as long as he keeps a good swinging balance at his bank? What does he care, sir? answer me that;" and General Praun inflicted sundry severe punches on the flags at his feet, as if exhorting the very stones to rise and bear testimony on his behalf. "I tell you what, Maddox," he continued, lowering his tone, "if Beelzebub's account stood at over four figures, it's my impression Molecombe would ask him to dinner!"

General Maddox shook his head solemnly, and said gently, "Too true, I am afraid; but Molecombe will live to discover that a gambler's account is liable to considerable fluctuations;" and with this exchange of amiable sentiments the two veterans separated.

(To be continued.)

“ THAT HEART OF THINE.”

Oh ! love, ere we part, let me speak once—
Just once to that heart of thine,
Whose pulses no passion can quicken,
Who dreams not that love is divine.
If I plead with you—say—will you listen ?
Will my words make you tremble and start ?
Will those cold eyes not soften and glisten
With love's tender smart ?

Oh ! love, are the days all forgotten,
The days that I thought were for aye
Which sorrow from memories begotten
Is clouding my spirit to-day ?
Oh ! love, did you only but love me,
What rapture and joy would be thine !
The sunshine of life would surround thee,
The sadness be mine.

In the days that are coming, my loved one,
The days full of shadows and pain,
Will the love of my heart then awaken
An echo in thy heart again ?
Though cruel and cold, I adore thee,
With love at its highest and best ;
Ah ! never it waneth, believe me,
Till Death giveth rest.

NELLIE FORTESCUE-HARRISON.

SOCIAL ECHOES.

By MRS. HUMPHRY.

THE present season, now drawing to a speedy close, will long be remembered as an extremely brilliant one. The Jubilee year of our good queen's reign became, in a manner, concentrated into the later days of June and the earlier ones of July. These saw London full of notabilities, kings, princes, princesses, grand dukes and their duchesses, Eastern potentates, whose raiment was so dazzling to our unaccustomed eyes that few of us could take real note of the wearers. Perhaps the Corporation Ball at the Guildhall afforded the curious the best opportunity of seeing these distinguished persons. The penalty of standing for three hours was rewarded by an excellent view of the royal guests, among whom the Crown Princess of Germany appeared to excite the greatest interest. The eldest child of Queen Victoria, whose sex proved so disappointing just at first, is not often seen in this country. Of late years, when she has come here, it has been only to hide herself in the obscurity of some rural retreat; and, even on this occasion, she preferred the suburban freshness of Upper Norwood to the formalities of Buckingham Palace during the first weeks of her stay. Consequently, her face and figure are almost unknown to the British people. As she passed up the corridors to the reception dais on the night of the ball, we saw a lady with dark brown hair, smoothly banded away from her face. Her smiling eyes appeared to be greyish blue, and a certain stately carriage of the head accentuated her remarkable likeness to her mother, as she was some twenty years ago, and gave an effect of height to her figure. She is by no means tall, and yet no one would call her short, so well-proportioned is her figure, and so well does she walk. Nor would any one be inclined to associate the idea of a grandmother with this pleasant-faced and bright-eyed royal lady. She looks about thirty-five, and has a much younger air than Princess Christian. Yet she has been a grandmother three or four years. One could, however, quite realize that our Princess Royal is an influence in Europe. There is much decision in her face. Firmness is to be traced in the lines of the chin, yet does not contradict the kindly mouth. A look of power in the eyes matches the regal pose of the head, and all the while, the whole expression is one that would induce a troubled child to appeal with confidence

to the owner for help and consolation. Stately Prince Fritz has a noble partner.

Another personage who was regarded with much curiosity was the King of Denmark, on whose arm leaned the Princess of Wales. He is tall and must have been handsome not very long ago. He retains in some sort the boyish look of lightheartedness which is always fascinating in middle age. Fun seemed to lurk in the corners of his eyes and mouth, as he glanced hither and thither among the crowd. His daughter seems to adore him, and the humorous expression of his eyes was reflected in hers as she made some low comment which was responded to with a broad smile. The princess herself looked exquisite, her lovely colouring showing to advantage in the soft radiance of the electric light. Her coronet of diamonds was even more becoming to her than was the marvellous and matchless tiara of diamonds and emeralds to the Grand Duchess Elizabeth of Russia. Hers is a face rather difficult to fit with an epithet. She is not precisely beautiful. To call her handsome would be to invite contradiction, and to say that she is pretty would be an injustice, for she is far more. Her fascinating face would need hours, if not weeks, to read. It is a charming volume, not a page, or a single line, as most faces are. To my mind she is a perfect embodiment of Catherine, in Emily Brontë's wonderful story, "Wuthering Heights." There is the same inexpressible charm, the same pride, the same sweetness, the same scorn, the same cleverness, the same ineffable sadness and the same mirth. She looks as though her life would one day afford matter for a dozen romances. But like Catherine, she rather gives one the idea expressed by Mrs. Carlyle of being "gey ill to live with." There is no placidity, no repose, no comfortable levels anywhere. Such natures are as difficult to "companion" comfortably as it would be to sit at rest on a gymnastic swing. One has always to be setting one's moral and spiritual clock to their varying time, fast one moment, slow the next.

An amusing circumstance about the Indian princes was the calm serenity with which they turned to stare at any one who inspired them with interest. A pretty girl in the front row of gazers suffered a short agony of embarrassment from the long intentness with which one of these magnificent personages regarded her, looking back over his shoulder as he walked, and showing not the smallest concern for her visible distress and her glowing blushes.

The kings of Saxony and of the Belgians are contrasts in every way. The former is the more regal of the two, though shorter by several inches. His face has much dignity of expression, besides a look of shrewdness and common sense, which is by no means a usual characteristic of either imperial or regal persons. The King of the Belgians is very tall, but does not impress one with any idea of kingliness; his gait is almost slouching, and his eyes

have a shifty look. His queen, on the contrary, has a charming face. Her eyes look straight at the person she is talking to, with a sort of laugh in them; her beauty is as unmistakable now as when, some years ago, she was one of the brightest stars in the firmament of the Austrian court.

Queen Kapiolani's dignity is of a kind that makes the beholder smile—not because the lady's skin is dark and her eyes rather closely set together, but because the stately air is so evidently not that of daily life; it is a sort of strut, a cross between the prima donna's long and jerky step and the flat-footed walk of the peacock when his tail is vaingloriously erect. Her dusky majesty has a pleasant look withal, though I should be sorry to rouse the ire that lies not quite *perdu* in the depths of her glowing eyes. She is too self-assertive in manner to be compatible with true dignity, which is always sufficiently sure of itself to dispense with forms and ceremonies.

We thought that the papal representative, Monsignor Ruffo Scilla, was treated with scant courtesy by his civic hosts. This gentleman belongs to a princely house, and has all the air of doing so. The disinclination of the aldermen to approach him may possibly have proceeded from their consciousness that Italian had not been included in their early or later education. The Stock Exchange and the City Mart are not precisely the places where one is likely to pick up courtly phrases of the exquisite *lingua Romana*, which sounds so mellifluously soft *in bocca Toscana*.

London was a veritable burning fiery furnace during the most brilliant weeks of the season, and the flight towards rural scenes began earlier than usual this year. Henley Regatta was welcomed as an airy outing by thousands, who turned a mile or so of the Thames into an urban crowd. Lovely indeed looked Beauty on a house-boat or under an umbrella tent in the golden weather that prevailed. This has been a season of garden-parties. Every one who has even the semblance of a garden has recognized the opportunity of really delighting London friends with the joys of fresh air, a seat under the green trees, and a cup of tea in Nature's drawing-room. Most welcome have been these rural interludes to town life, and the gratification of seeing one's friends *en masse* has been almost equalled by the delight of inhaling air that may with some appearance of truth be called fresh, and of seeing those "boundless tracts of sky" that, to the vision limited by miles of brick and mortar, seem almost to bring an added sense: a feeling of space enlarged and capacity of sensation extended.